THE AMERICAN ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW

VOL. CXXXI, NO. 4 OCTOBER, 1954

CONTENTS

The Prayers of Pope Pius XII . . . . . *Vincent A. Yzermans* 217

The Sacred Heart and Priests . . . . *Carl J. Moell, S.J.* 232

The Divine Incarnate Word and the Written Word of God *Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.* 240

Eucharistic Belief Manifest in the Epitaphs of Abercius and Pectorius . . . . *Gregory Grabka, O.F.M.Conv.* 245

Mary, Ever-Virgin. Part II . . . *Thomas U. Mullaney, O.P.* 256

The Meaning of the Name "Church" . *Joseph Clifford Fenton* 268

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Walter J. Schmitz, S.S., Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., and Joseph Clifford Fenton

Error and Rights 277

The Catholic Church and Sectarianism 278

Standing or Sitting "At the Right Hand of God" 280

(*Contents Continued on Next Page*)

Published monthly by The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 17, D. C. Subscription price in U. S. currency or equivalent: United States, Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $5.00; 50 cents per copy.

Entered as second class matter, November 30, 1944, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Accepted for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for under Act of March 5, 1930, under Act of February 28, 1925.

Business communications, including subscriptions and changes of address, should be addressed to The American Ecclesiastical Review, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 17. D. C

Please address all manuscripts and editorial correspondence to The Editor, The American Ecclesiastical Review, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

Copyright 1954, by the Catholic University of America Press

(*Contents Continued from Previous Page*)

Mental Recitation of the Divine Office 280
Communist Literature 281
The Right to Assist at a Mixed Marriage 281
The Vested Crucifix 282
The Scapular Medal 283
The Words "Antistite nostro" in the Canon 283
A Difficulty about the "Imperata" 284
An Error in the Ordo 284
Funeral in a Chapel of Perpetual Adoration 285
The Sacristy Bell 285

BOOK REVIEW

Pius X: A Country Priest, *by Igino Giordani* 286

SAVE $2.00 —*for a limited time!*

CONSULAR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PAPAL STATES

Edited by Leo Francis Stock, 1945

CLOTH BOUND
List Price $5.00

SPECIAL
$3.00

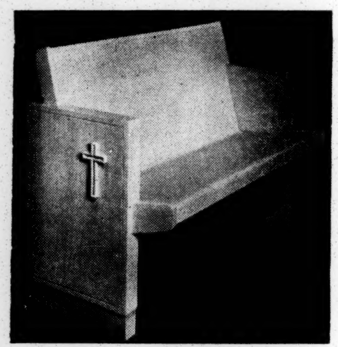
This offer expires November 30, 1954

Also available at the regular price of $5.00, *United States Ministers to the Papal States*, edited by Stock.

Order now! from:

The Catholic University of America Press
620 Michigan Avenue, N. E.
Washington 17, D. C.

CRAFTSMANSHIP
. . . in wood



Pews by CATHEDRAL CRAFTSMEN are made in continuous lengths without obstructive center divisions thus creating usable space over entire length of pew. Backs and seats are factory assembled into continuous units without loose joints at seat and back or length junctions.

For information regarding pews and other church furnishings write to:

CATHEDRAL CRAFTSMEN
P. O. Box 286, Dept. F
WAUKESHA—WISCONSIN

THE PRAYERS OF POPE PIUS XII

The accounts we read and hear of our Holy Father's activities give us many facets of his character. He towers above all other men in our world today as "the unwearied advocate" of peace. He is exceptional in the fact that he has met and conversed with more people than any other living man. His biblical, liturgical, canonical, and governmental decrees have already made ecclesiastical history. All these spiritual and temporal accomplishments are made known to us in the pages of the daily press.

There is, however, another aspect of his character that is not easily perceived. Pope Pius XII is not only a letter-writer and a speech-maker, but also a prayer-composer. The Catholic press has carried some of them. However, since the prayers he composed extend over a period of fifteen years we are apt to forget that he has composed and given for our use a rich variety of prayers adapted to the needs and occasions of our times.

In the course of the past fifteen years Pope Pius XII has personally composed and published eighteen prayers. That statement, however, may not be completely accurate. In the many public addresses he has delivered there have been occasions when the Supreme Pontiff has ended his statements in prayerful phraseology. To distinguish between a strict prayer and a prayerful style is admittedly no easy task. The number eighteen is the figure that I have personally arrived at after examining the writings of the Pope.

Some of these prayers are well known. Some have been frequently recited both by individuals and vast congregations. Most of them, however, have not received too much publicity and as a result are little known. As a matter of fact, most of them are not readily accessible. For that reason I felt it would be good to have them collected and published all together in one article so that there would be at least one place where those interested could find them.

I have taken the liberty to preface each of the eighteen prayers with a few introductory remarks.

1. PRAYER FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE WAR

On November 24, 1940, Pope Pius XII delivered a radio message to the world entitled "Appeal for a Just Peace." After exhorting all Christians to sacrifice, pray, and labor for the sake of world peace, the Holy Father concluded his discourse with a prayer for the Victims of the War and a prayer for a just peace.

O Father who art in heaven, O God, our strength, turn Thy gaze toward Christ Thy Son. Behold the Christian marks of His Wounds, to which He was brought by His love for us and His obedience to Thee, through which He ever wished to be our Advocate and Peacemaker.

O Jesus, our Saviour, speak to Thy Father for us, intercede with Him for us, for Thy Church, for all men who have been won by Thy blood. O Peace-bringing King, O Prince of Peace! Thou Who hast the keys of life and death, grant the peace of eternal rest to the souls of all faithful who have been swept to their death in this whirlwind of war and have been known and unknown, wept and unwept, and buried beneath the ruins of cities and villages destroyed, or have met their deaths on gory plains, on war-torn hillsides, in gorges and valleys or in the depths of the sea.

May Thy purifying Blood descend on them in their pains, to wash their mantles and render them worthy and bright in Thy blessed sight. Do Thou, O loving Comforter of the afflicted, Who didst weep at the tears of Martha and the many desolate for their brothers, grant peace and consolation, resignation and health to those poor people who are overcome by the sorrows and tribulations of war's calamities, to exiles, to refugees, to unknown wanderers, to prisoners and to the wounded, who trust in Thee.

Dry abundant tears of wives, mothers, orphans, of whole families, of so many left destitute; heavy tears falling on the bread of sorrow, eaten after long fasts in cold hovels; bread divided between children who often have been brought to Thy altars in a little church to pray for father or elder brother, dead perhaps, or wounded, or missing.

Console them all with Divine gifts and with those helps and that effective charitable relief which is our task. Suggest to kindly souls they recognize in the afflicted and unfortunate their brothers and love them as Thy image. Give to the combatants, together with heroism in full token of their duty, even to the supreme sacrifice in defense of their native land, that noble sense of humanity by which they will not, no matter in what circumstances, do to others that which they would not have done to themselves or their country.

O Lord, may Thy Divine Spirit reign and triumph over the world. May the peace of concord and justice among nations be restored. May our prayers be acceptable and welcome to the meek and humble in heart. May the numbers and devotion of Holy Sacrifices which Thy Church, on bended knees, offers to Thee, Priest and Victim eternally, through Thy Holy Mother, render Thee propitious toward us. Thou hast words which penetrate and overcome hearts, which enlighten intellects, which assuage anger and extinguish hates and revenge. Speak that word which will still the storm, which will heal the sick, which is light to the blind and hearing to the deaf and life to the dead. Amen.

2. PRAYER FOR A JUST PEACE

Peace among men, which Thou desirest, is dead. Bring it back to life, O Divine Conqueror of death. Through Thee, at last may the land and sea be calmed. May whirlwinds, that in the light of day or in the dark of night scatter terror, fire, destruction and slaughter on humble folks, cease. May justice and charity on one side and on the other be in perfect balance, so that all injustice be repaired, and the reign of right restored, all disorder and rancor be banished from men's minds. And may there arise, and gather strength in contemplation of a new harmonious prosperity, true and well-ordered peace that will permanently unite as brothers, through the ages, in harmonious search of high good, all peoples of the human race in Thy sight. Amen.

3. CONSECRATION OF THE HUMAN RACE TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

In October, 1942 the Portuguese Hierarchy celebrated the silver jubilee of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. On October 31, when the hierarchy, clergy, and people of Portugal gathered in the Cathedral of Lisbon for the solemn closing of the celebration, His Holiness delivered an address by radio on Our Lady of Fatima. He concluded the address with the following Act of Consecration.

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Refuge of the human race, Victress of all God's battles, we humbly prostrate ourselves before thy throne, confident that we shall receive mercy, grace, and bountiful assistance and protection in the present calamity, not through our own merits, but solely through the great goodness of thy maternal Heart.

To thee, to thy Immaculate Heart, We as Common Father of the great Christian Family, as Vicar of Him to whom was given all power in heaven and on earth and from whom We received the care of all souls redeemed by His Precious Blood—to thee, to thy Immaculate Heart, in this tragic hour of human history, We confide, deliver, and consecrate, not only the holy Church, the Mystic Body of Jesus, now in such suffering and agony in so many places and sorely tried in so many ways, but also the entire world torn by fierce strife, consumed in a fire of hate, victim of its own wickedness.

May the sight of the widespread material and moral destruction, of the sorrows and anguish of countless fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and innocent children, of the great number of lives cut down in the flower of youth, of the bodies mangled in horrible slaughter, and of the tortured and agonized souls in danger of being lost eternally, move thee to compassion.

O Mother of Mercy, obtain peace for us from God, and above all provide for us those graces which prepare, establish, and assure the peace.

Queen of Peace, pray for us and give to the world now at war the peace for which all people are longing, peace in the truth, justice, and charity of Christ. Give peace to the warring nations and to the souls of men, that in the tranquillity of order the kingdom of God may prevail.

Extend thy protection to the infidels and to all those still in the shadow of death; give them peace and grant that on them, too, may shine the sun of truth, that they may unite with us in proclaiming before the one and only Saviour of the world: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

Give peace to the people separated from Us by error or by schism, and especially to the one who professes such singular devotion to thee and in whose homes an honored place was ever accorded thy venerable icon (today perhaps often kept hidden to await better days); bring them back to the one fold of Christ under the one true Shepherd.

Lastly, as the Church and the entire human race were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so that in reposing all hope in Him, He might become for them the sign and pledge for victory and salvation; so we in like manner consecrate ourselves forever also to thee and to thy Immaculate Heart, our Mother and Queen, that thy love and patronage may hasten the triumph of the kingdom of God, and that all nations, at peace with one another and with God, may proclaim thee blessed and with thee may raise their voices to resound from pole to pole in the chant of the everlasting Magnificat of glory, love and gratitude to the Heart of Jesus, where alone they can find truth, life, and peace.

4. PRAYER FOR THE PEACEMAKERS

On the occasion of the beginning of the fourth year of the war, September 1, 1943, Pope Pius XII delivered a radio broadcast to the world. He enunciated again that the Holy See has nothing but the welfare and benefit of the whole human race in mind and reiterated his plea for a generous peace. He concluded the address with the following prayer for peacemakers.

> May it please the Divine Redeemer from whose lips came the words, "Blessed are the peacemakers," to enlighten the powerful and leaders of peoples, inspire their thoughts, their feelings and their deliberations, make them spiritually and materially vigorous and firm against obstacles, mistrust and perils which obstruct the path toward preparation and settlement of a just and lasting peace.
>
> May their wisdom, their moderation, their strength of mind and their deep sense of humanity throw a ray of comfort upon the tear and blood-drenched threshold of the fifth year of war and give the survivors of the immense conflict, bent under a load of sorrow, joyful hope that the year may not end under the sign and in the shadow of slaughter and destruction, but may be the beginning and dawn of a new life, of brotherly reconciliation and thorough and peaceful reconstruction. Amen.

5. PRAYER TO OUR LADY

The encyclical letter of June 29, 1943, on the Mystical Body of Christ was an occasion when Pope Pius XII once again exercised his office as supreme teacher of the flock of Christ. Before concluding his treatise on the nature and function of the Church, the Pope inserted the following short prayer to the Mother of the Mystical Body.

> May She, then, The Most Holy Mother of all the members of Christ, to whose Immaculate Heart We have trustfully consecrated all mankind, and who now reigns in heaven with her Son, her body and soul refulgent with heavenly glory—may she never cease to beg from Him that copious streams of grace may flow from its exalted Head into all the members of the Mystical Body. May she throw about the Church today, as in times gone by, the mantle of her protection and obtain from God that now at last the Church and all mankind may enjoy more peaceful days. Amen.

6. PRAYER TO THE NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS

November 24, 1946, marked the tercentenary of the death of the North American Martyrs. The occasion was fittingly commemorated at their shrine in New York State and was climaxed by a radio broadcast delivered by the Holy Father on the virtues of this heroic band of Jesuits and their helpers. The address concluded with the following prayer to the North American Martyrs.

St. Isaac, St. John, St. René, look down with heaven-born love on the Faithful who fill the land you longed to conquer for Christ. Through your powerful intercession before the throne of God obtain for them the grace to share something of the spirit that was yours on earth. May the clergy and religious intensify their life of prayer and self abnegation, for in such soil missionary zeal springs up and grows quickly; may the youth, that American youth always so ready and eager to throw themselves whole-heartedly into every worthy and noble venture, for whom obstacles are but a challenge to their courage, may they seize the torch of faith, lighted by you in the wilderness, and carry it full-flaming to the ends of the earth, until all men may see and know Jesus Christ, the Divine Master Who has loved them all with an eternal love, and Whom you, Blessed Martyrs, contemplate, with ineffable joy. Amen.

7. PRAYER FOR THE SICK

In a radio message to the sick of the world, delivered on November 21, 1949, the Supreme Pontiff exhorted the sick to see the immense supernatural value of their sufferings when offered for the spiritual success of the coming Holy Year and for the intention of the Holy Father. The address concluded with the following prayer for the sick.

O Jesus, may our prayer, in union with the sorrow of the most holy Mother, carry with it the prayer of those who suffer in their own body, or in the body of those whom they love more than life itself. Turn Thine eyes towards the poor father of a family, too ill to work, who can no longer provide for and educate his children by the sweat of his brow. Turn Thine eyes to the mother, whose strength has now failed her and who has to leave the home which she planned and guided with such love for the good and happiness of the family. Turn Thine eyes towards those young men, so determined and enterprizing, who asked only to work and use their lives well, and now see themselves, instead, fastened to a bed of pain while so many others foolishly waste their health and youthful vigor. Turn Thine eyes to those young women, for whom life was just opening as they went forward with a smile to a future full of promise. Turn Thine eyes to those men and women full of charity, instruments of

God's Providence for the afflicted and the wayward, whose sickness is such a loss to those many unfortunate people once helped by their charity.

Jesus, hear Our prayer. Hear us as Thou didst hear the petition of the centurion for his servant; of the nobleman for his son, of Jairus for his daughter dying in the flower of youth, of the Chananean whose faith so deeply moved Thy heart.

Yet, if in Thy adorable design still hidden from us their time of trial is not yet ended, but must last even unto death, deign to grant the dying a holy and peaceful passing, and those who still suffer, a childlike resignation. Grant them the full enjoyment of the supernatural benefit of this Jubilee. Grant them the consolation of knowing that through their bodily weakness—yes, precisely because of it, they can fulfill the noble and saving mission which Thou hast entrusted to them.

Grant those who stand sorrowfully at their bedside the strength to encourage the sick by their presence, and to join their sorrows with those of the most pure Mother who stood so steadfastly at the foot of Thy cross. Amen.

8. PRAYER FOR THE HOLY YEAR

On December 23, 1949, with the solemn opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Pius XII inaugurated the Holy Year of 1950—the Year of God, the Year of the Great Return. For the occasion the Pontiff composed and published the following Holy Year Prayer which was frequently recited in all the churches of Christendom throughout the year.

Almighty and eternal God, with our whole soul we thank Thee for the great gift of the Holy Year.

Heavenly Father, Thou Who seest all things, Who searchest and dost guide the hearts of men, make them responsive, in this time of grace and salvation, to the voice of Thy Son.

May the Holy Year be for all men a year of purification and sanctification, of interior life and reparation, the year of the great return and of the great pardon.

Bestow on those, who are suffering persecution for the Faith, Thy spirit of fortitude, to unite them inseparably with Christ and His Church.

Protect, O Lord, the Vicar of Thy Son on earth together with all bishops, priests, religious, and all the faithful. Vouchsafe that all, both priests and laity, the young, the mature, and the old, united intimately in thought and affection, may become as a solid rock, against which the fury of Thy enemies will break in vain.

May Thy grace enkindle in all men love for the many unfortunate people, whom poverty and misery reduce to a condition of life unworthy of human beings.

Arouse in the heart of those who call Thee Father a hunger and thirst for social justice and for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth.

"Grant, O Lord, peace in our days"—peace to souls, peace to families, peace to our country, peace among nations. May the rainbow of peace cover with the sweep of its serene light the Land sanctified by the life and passion of Thy Divine Son.

God of all consolation! Deep is our misery, grave are our faults, countless our needs. But greater still is our trust in Thee. Conscious of our unworthiness, we lovingly place our lot in Thy hands, uniting our weak prayers to the intercession and the merits of the most glorious Virgin Mary and all the Saints.

Grant to the sick, resignation and health; to young men, the strength that is born of faith; to young girls, the gift of purity; to fathers, prosperity and holiness for their families; to mothers success in their mission of rearing their children; to orphans, affectionate protection; to the refugees and prisoners, their fatherland, and to all men Thy grace, in preparation and pledge of the unending happiness of heaven. Amen.

9. PRAYER OF REPARATION FOR THE SINS OF MEN

On Passion Sunday, March 26, 1950, Pope Pius XII delivered an address in St. Peter's Basilica entitled "The Christian Restoration of Society." The Pope called upon all Christians to renew the spirit of penance in reparation for the sins of mankind. Again, the address concluded with the following prayer.

O Jesus Crucified, who has deified human nature by assuming it Yourself, Who after having preached justice, charity, goodness, Who after having made of the rich and the powerful the strength of the poor and the weak, have by Your Passion and Death bestowed grace and salvation on the human race, turn Your loving glance on this people which, in union with the faithful of the whole world, prostrates itself at Your feet in the spirit of penitence and implores Your pardon, also for those many unhappy creatures who would deliberately uncrown and profane You in the vile pride of their intelligence, the empty sensuality of their flesh.

O Lord, save us lest we perish. Calm the waves of the troubled sea of our spirit, be our companion in life and death, our merciful

Judge. May the thunderbolts of well deserved punishment give place to a new and generous outpouring of Your mercy upon redeemed humanity. Extinguish hatred and rekindle love, dispel with the powerful Breath of Your Spirit schemes and desires for domination, destruction and war. Grant bread to the little ones, homes to the homeless, work to the workless, concord to nations, peace to the world and to all the reward of eternal happiness. Amen.

10. PRAYER TO SAINT MARIA GORETTI

The middle of the Holy Year marked a solemnity which Pope Pius XII declared was "unique in the annals of the Church." It was the canonization of the young virgin-martyr of purity, St. Maria Goretti. Following the solemn rite of canonization in the Piazza of St. Peter's, His Holiness delivered an address on the life of the young Saint as an example for all young men and women to follow. The address closed with the following prayer in honor of the newly canonized Saint.

We greet you, O beautiful and lovable Saint! Martyr on earth and angel in heaven, look down from your glory on this people, which loves you, which venerates, glorifies and exalts you. On your forehead you bear the full brilliant and victorious name of Christ. In your virginal countenance may be read the strength of your love and the constancy of your fidelity to your Divine Spouse. As His bride espoused in blood, you have traced in yourself His own image. To you, therefore, powerful intercessor with the Lamb of God, we entrust these Our sons and daughters who are present here, and those countless others who are united with Us in spirit. For while they admire your heroism, they are even more desirous of imitating your strength of faith and your inviolate purity of conduct. Fathers and mothers have recourse to you, asking you to help them in their task of education. In you, through Our hands, the children and all the young people will find a safe refuge, trusting that they shall be protected from every contamination, and be able to walk the highways of life with that serenity of spirit and deep joy which is the heritage of those who are pure of heart. Amen.

11. PRAYER IN HONOR OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The most glorious single day of Pope Pius' entire pontificate was, without a doubt, that November 1, 1950, when with the infallible magisterium of the apostolic office he solemnly defined as a dogma of faith the bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the eve of the definition, following a procession with the image of Our Lady, *Salus Populi Romani,* from the Church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli to St. Peter's Basilica, the Pope knelt in his private chapel and prayed the Assumption prayer which he himself composed. At the same time his voice was carried over the loudspeaker into St. Peter's Square.

O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of men: We believe with all the fervor of our faith in your triumphant assumption in soul and in body into Heaven, where you are acclaimed Queen by all the Choirs of Angels and by all the ranks of the Saints; and we unite with them in praise and bless the Lord, who has exalted you above all other pure creatures, and to offer you the tribute of our devotion and our love. We know that your gaze, which on earth watched over the humble and suffering humanity of Jesus, in Heaven is filled with the vision of that humanity glorified, and with the vision of Uncreated Wisdom, and that the joy of your soul in the direct contemplation of the adorable Trinity causes your heart to throb with overwhelming tenderness; and we, poor sinners, whose body weighs down the light of the soul, beg you to purify our hearts so that, while we remain here below, we may learn to see God and God alone in the beauties of His creatures. We trust that your merciful eyes may deign to glance down upon our struggles and our weaknesses; that your countenance may smile upon our joys and our victories; that you may hear the voice of Jesus saying to you of each one of us, as He once said to you of His Beloved Disciple: Behold thy son. And we, who call upon you as our Mother, we like John take you as the guide, strength, and consolidation of our mortal life. We are inspired by the certainty that your eyes, which wept over the earth watered by the blood of Jesus, are yet turned toward this world, held in the clutch of wars, persecutions, oppressions of the just and the weak; and from the shadows of this vale of tears, we seek in your heavenly assistance and tender mercy comfort for our aching hearts and help in the trials of the Church and of our fatherland. We believe, finally, that in the glory where you reign, clothed with the sun and crowned with the stars, you are, after Jesus, the joy and gladness of all the angels and of all the saints; and from this earth, over which we tread as pilgrims, comforted by our faith in future resurrection, we look to you, our life, our sweetness, and our hope; draw us onward with the sweetness of your voice that one day, after our exile, you may show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

12. PRAYER TO BLESSED PIUS X

June 3, 1951, conferred on Pope Pius XII the honor of declaring his illustrious predecessor, Pope Pius X, a Blessed of the Church. In the falling shadows of evening the Pope addressed an unprecedented audience on the life, virtues, and objectives of his holy predecessor. He concluded the address with the following prayer.

Blessed Pontiff, faithful servant of thy Lord, humble and sure follower of the Divine Master, in sorrow and in joy, in cares and in anxiety, tried Shepherd of the flock of Christ, turn thy face towards us who are prostrate before thy pure body. Hard are the times in which we live. Stern are the efforts which they demand of us. The Spouse of Christ, once entrusted to thy care, is now beset once more by bitter trials. Her children are threatened by numberless perils, both of soul and body. The spirit of the world, like a raging lion, prowls everywhere, seeking whom it may devour. Many fall victim to it. They have eyes and they see not. Their eyes are closed to the light of truth eternal, their ears are open to sinister and deceitful appeals. Do thou, who wert here below a great inspiration and guide to the people of God, intercede for us; help us and all who profess themselves followers of Christ. Do thou, whose heart was broken by the sight of a world falling headlong into bloodshed and strife, come to the aid of human kind and of Christendom, now facing a danger as great as then. Obtain from the Divine Mercy the gift of lasting peace, and, as harbinger of that, the return of men's minds to that spirit of true brotherhood which alone can bring to all nations the justice and concord willed by God. Amen.

13. PRAYER FOR LAY APOSTLES

In the fall of 1951 the first World Congress of Lay Apostles was held in the Eternal City. On September 31, His Holiness received a large delegation from the Congress and gave a significant address entitled, "The Lay Apostolate—Its Need Today." In connection with the Congress the Pope had the following prayer, which he composed, published for the sake of lay apostles throughout the world.

O Lord Jesus, who hast called us to the honor of making our humble contribution to the work of the hierarchical apostolate, Thou Who hast asked of the Heavenly Father not to remove us from the world but to preserve us from evil (John 17, 15), grant us an abundance of Thy light and Thy grace that we may crush in ourselves the spirit of darkness and sin, so that, aware of our duty, persevering in good, and inflamed by zeal for Thy cause by the power of example, prayers, action and supernatural life we may make ourselves every day more worthy of our holy mission, more capable of establishing and promoting among men, who are brothers, Thy kingdom of justice, peace and love. Amen.

14. PRAYER FOR THE MARIAN YEAR

Under the date of December 8, 1953, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* published a prayer composed by Pope Pius XII for the Marian Year. Perhaps no prayer to date has been so widely circulated and become so popular to the Catholic people as this prayer which so beautifully brings out the glory of Mary and fervently beseeches her to "make all mankind feel the attraction of Christian goodness."

Enraptured by the splendor of your heavenly beauty and moved by the anxieties of the world, we cast ourselves into your arms, O Immaculate Mother of Jesus and our Mother Mary, confident of finding in your most loving Heart fulfilment of our ardent desires and a safe harbor from the tempests which beset us on every side.

Though humiliated by our faults and overwhelmed by profound misery, we admire and praise the peerless richness of the sublime gifts with which God has filled you above every other mere creature from the first moment of your conception until the day on which he crowned you Queen of Heaven and earth after your Assumption into Heaven.

O crystal Fountain of Faith, enlighten our minds with the eternal truths!

O fragrant Lily of all Holiness enrapture our hearts with your heavenly perfume!

O Vanquisher of Evil and Death, inspire in us a deep horror of sin which makes the soul repugnant to God and a slave of hell!

O Beloved of God, hear the ardent cry which rises from every heart in this year dedicated to you!

Bend tenderly over our aching wounds. Convert the wicked, dry the tears of the afflicted and oppressed, comfort the poor and humble, extinguish hatreds, sweeten harshness, safeguard the flower of purity in youth, protect the Holy Church, make all mankind feel the attraction of Christian goodness!

In Your Name, echoing harmoniously in Heaven, may all men recognize that they are brothers and that the nations are members of one family, so that the sun of a universal and sincere peace may shine forth.

Receive, O, sweetest Mother, our humble supplications and above all obtain for us that one day happy with you we may repeat before your throne the hymn that today is sung on earth around your altars:

You are all beautiful, O Mary.
You are the glory, you are the joy,
You are the honor of our people. Amen.

15. PRAYER TO SAINT PIUS X

Never had a canonization brought such a vast throng of pilgrims from every corner of the world to Rome as the solemn glorification of Saint Pius X on May 29, 1954. Nor has any canonization in the history of the Church caused such world-wide interest and publicity as the raising of St. Pius X to the altars of the Church. In one of the exceptionally long addresses of his reign, Pope Pius XII underscored the example the new Saint gave us by his stressing the Holy Eucharist and the interior life as the means for realizing a restoration of all things in Christ. The address concluded with the following prayer.

Saint Pius X, glory of the priesthood, light and honor of the Christian people—you in whom lowliness seemed blended with greatness, severity with mildness, simple piety with profound learning; you, Pope of the Holy Eucharist and of the Catechism, of unsullied faith and fearless strength turn your gaze on the Holy Church, which you so loved and to which you consecrated the choicest of those treasures with which the lavish hand of the divine bounty had enriched your soul: obtain for her safety and steadfastness amid the difficulties and persecutions of our times; sustain this poor human race, whose sufferings which at the end stilled the beating of your great heart; bring it about that this troubled world witness the triumph of that peace which should mean harmony among nations, brotherly accord and charity among individual men, so that thus those ardent desires which consumed your apostolic life may become by your intercession a blessed reality, to the glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

16. PRAYER FOR MEMBERS OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD

A leaflet circulated by the national office of the Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood contains the following prayer of Pope Pius XII for the members of the Holy Childhood. I was unable to find any other source than this for the following prayer.

O Jesus—born a tiny Babe so that all children may feel You are their Brother, and know that You love them, behold us from all over the world, united around You, to tell You today in one great chorus, that we love You and desire to reproduce Your traits in our spirit, our heart and our life. You draw all to Yourself and we respond so willingly to Your invitation. You open wide Your arms and we are so happy to repose upon Your bosom. But, dear Jesus, all Your little ones are not here. The greatest number of little children do not know You yet as we do, they do not know that You are seeking them, that You are waiting for them and that it is for *them* you are asking those who love You, as the gift which would please You most and the one You most desire. For them, then, we pray, dear Jesus, as we pray for ourselves. Grant that the glad tidings of Your coming and of Your Kingdom may reach out to all the corners of the world. Grant that to Your Name, O Jesus, may everywhere resound the Hosanna sung by the children of Jerusalem in the day of Your triumph. And may our words, eloquent in Your behalf, render to You, our Brother, our Friend and our Master the praise which the pride of men denies You. Amen.

17. PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF EMIGRANTS

A quite recent prayer of our Holy Father is addressed to Our Lady of Emigrants. It was published on November 27, 1953, six days after the Marian Year Prayer. With its frequent references to the displaced person and the political exile it recalls the many pleas for justice and mercy our Holy Father has addressed throughout his pontificate to the powers of nations on behalf of the dispossessed and destitute. The following translation was issued by the N. C. W. C. News Service.

Most Holy Virgin Mary, Escort of Exiles, who trudge the roads of all the world in search of work and bread, look with compassion on our situation and bless all who help us; you who have known exile yourself, be ever mindful, we implore, of us uprooted by want and of those, our brothers, who generously welcome us to share in their hard toil.

O Virgin Mary, Help of Christians and Consolation of the Afflicted, be a loving mother to us whom fate has forced to live far from our native lands, burdened with apprehensions as we work for ourselves and our families, with seldom a friend who can understand our problems fully and in our familiar native tongue. Invigorate our flagging spirit.

With your consoling kindness, with your strong motherly assistance, through your prayers of intercession, protect us in exile and our anxious families at home that, sustained as we all are by faith, hope and charity, we may walk in the fear of God, in submission to His Divine Will, faithful to Christ and His Church and thus may enjoy the fruits of redemption and merit thereby earthly peace and heavenly happiness. Amen.

18. PRAYER OF REPARATION AGAINST BLASPHEMY

The Holy Father composed this, the most recent of his prayers, for use at the International Congress of Marian Congregations held in Rome during the month of September.

O, Most August Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, although infinitely happy from all eternity in and for Thyself, deign to accept graciously the homage which ascends from universal creation to Thy exalted throne. Turn away Thine eyes, for this we beseech Thee, and withdraw Thine ears from those unfortunate persons who, being either blinded by passion or carried away by diabolical impulse, wickedly blaspheme Thy name and that of the most pure Virgin Mary and of the Saints.

Restrain, O Lord, the arm of Thy justice which could reduce to nothing those who dare to become guilty of such great impiety.

Accept the hymn of glory which rises incessantly from all of nature: from the water which flows limpid and silent from the spring to the stars which, impelled by Love, shine and resolve in immense arcs in the heights of the heavens. Accept in reparation the chorus of praises which rises, as incense before the altars, from so many saintly souls who without ever straying walk in the pathways of Thy law and with constant works of charity and penance seek to placate Thy outraged justice. Listen to the chant of so many chosen spirits who consecrate their lives to the celebration of Thy glory, the perennial praise which the Church offers Thee at every hour and under all the heavens.

And grant that one day, with all blasphemous hearts converted to Thee, every tongue and every mouth may harmoniously join in intoning here below that canticle which resounds without end in the choirs of angels: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts. The heavens and the earth are filled with Thy Glory. Amen.

VINCENT A. YZERMANS

St. Cloud, Minn.

THE SACRED HEART AND PRIESTS

No Catholic, and above all no priest, is ignorant of the widespread influence of devotion to the Sacred Heart in the Church today. The past fifty years, following upon the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart by Pope Leo XIII, have seen a progress in the spread of the devotion that justifies the title sometimes given to our age, the Century of the Sacred Heart. Witness the repeated exhortations of the modern popes, the numerous churches and altars dedicated to the Sacred Heart, the tremendous, yet ever-increasing, number of First Friday Communions and Holy Hours, the long list of indulgenced prayers, ejaculations, and practices in honor of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. All of these indications—and others could be mentioned—show clearly that devotion to the Sacred Heart is not just another special devotion, but that it has a universal character as well; it is the *universal* devotion which is *in* all other devotions, nourishing, permeating, and vitalizing them all, since each mystery of faith is but a particular expression of the love of God.[1]

It is not surprising then that devotion to the Sacred Heart should have a special appeal for priests. For it is to priests, pastors of their souls, that the laity look for and receive guidance in their spiritual life. Devotion to the Sacred Heart would certainly never have attained the outstanding place it occupies in the Church today were it not for the encouragement of priests, bishops, and popes.

Besides the reasons presented to all the faithful for embracing this devotion, are there any special reasons why a priest should be personally devoted to the Heart of Christ? Is devotion to the Sacred Heart intended for the priest himself? Will it help toward his own personal sanctification? Will it help him in his pastoral duties, in his zeal for the salvation and sanctification of the souls entrusted to him?

---

[1] Cf. F. X. L'Hoir, S.J., *Alter Christus: Meditations for Priests* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1952), p. 88; *The Sacred Heart Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI,* Anniversary Edition. Introduction and Outlines by Carl J. Moell, S.J. (New York, The America Press, 1953), p. 5.

A glance at the familiar list of "Promises of Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary for Souls Devoted to His Sacred Heart" will quickly recall to the priest that many of the promises—in fact, almost all of them—refer to him as well as to others. But one of the promises is directly intended for him as a priest. It is the tenth promise: "I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts." Here is a special promise offering priests special blessings in their work for souls.

THE RECENT POPES SPEAK

The modern popes have repeatedly referred to devotion to the Sacred Heart when speaking to priests. Three years after his world-wide consecration to the Sacred Heart, Pope Leo XIII again refers to this consecration in his encyclical on the Most Holy Eucharist,[2] which he calls "a divine gift coming from the very Heart of the Redeemer." He speaks of the Sacred Heart later on when he urges priests to foster devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, so closely linked with devotion to the Sacred Heart:

> For priests, to whom Christ our Redeemer has entrusted the office of consecrating and dispensing the mystery of His body and blood, can surely make no better return for the great honor conferred upon them, than by promoting with all their strength the glory of His Eucharist, and by inviting and drawing the hearts of men to the health-giving fountains of this great Sacrament and Sacrifice, thereby seconding the longings of His Most Sacred Heart.

Well known to all priests are the three letters of the recent popes on the priesthood. St. Pius X mentions the Sacred Heart once toward the end of his exhortation to the Catholic clergy.[3] He is speaking of the sanctification of priests: "May God, we earnestly pray, help us in His mercy and providence. And from the Most Sacred Heart of His beloved Son may He pour out upon all the clergy abundance of grace, charity and every virtue."

Pope Pius XI speaks of the Sacred Heart several times in the course of his encyclical on the Catholic priesthood.[4] Though he does not disapprove of the practice in the Oriental Church, Pius XI sees in clerical celibacy "something which seems to Us to correspond better to the desires and purposes of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in regard to priestly souls." For when the priest is free from the cares of a family and of self-interest, "his heart will more readily be enflamed with that heavenly fire, the love of souls, that burns in the depths of the Heart of Jesus Christ; that fire that seeks only to reach apostolic hearts and to set all men on fire." It is such zeal that sends the priest to the home and foreign missions, for "seeing the multitudes . . . lying like sheep that have no shepherd" (*Matt.* 9:36), he feels "deeply within himself an echo of the divine pity which so often and so powerfully moved the divine Heart of Jesus Christ."

---

[2] Leo XIII, *Mirae caritatis,* May 28, 1902 (*ASS,* XXXIV [1901-2], 641-54).

[3] St. Pius X, *Haerent animo,* Aug. 4, 1908 (*ASS,* XLI [1908-9], 554 ff.).

[4] Pius XI, *Ad catholici sacerdotii,* Dec. 20, 1935 (*AAS,* XXVIII [1936], 1-53).

Later on in the encyclical the pope urges prayers for an increase of priestly vocations: "What prayer could be more pleasing to the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer? What prayer of ours can we expect to be answered as promptly and as bounteously as this, which so completely agrees with the burning desires of that divine Heart?"

Pope Pius XII also writes of the Sacred Heart in his apostolic exhortation to the clergy of the entire world.[5] Discussing the priest's call to perfection, he says the priest "must co-operate with Jesus Christ, the only and eternal Priest; he must follow and imitate Him, who during His earthly life had no other purpose than to testify to His most ardent love for His Father and to impart to men the infinite treasures of His Heart." He also recommends to priests a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament:

> Before closing his day's work, the priest will go before the Eucharistic tabernacle, and spend there at least a little time to adore Jesus in the Sacrament of His love, to make reparation for the ingratitude of so many men, to enkindle divine love ever more and more within himself, and finally to remain, in some sense, even during the time of repose at night, which reminds us of the silence of death, present in His Most Sacred Heart.

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

Pius XII's exhortations to priests are not restricted to *Menti Nostrae*. Repeatedly he has recommended the Apostleship of

---

[5] Pius XII, *Menti Nostrae*, Sept. 23, 1950 (*AAS*, XLII [1950], 657-702).

Prayer to them. The Holy Father himself clearly states the connection between the Apostleship of Prayer and devotion to the Sacred Heart: the Apostleship "urges all to put aside less trustworthy exercises of piety and to foster devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus—the devotion in which is contained 'the epitome of our holy religion and of a more perfect life" (Pius XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*). . . .[6] ". . . the Apostleship of Prayer can rightly and properly be called a perfect form of devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in turn devotion to the Sacred Heart can by no means be separated from the Apostleship of Prayer. . . ."[7] ". . . an ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus . . . is the very soul of this association. . . ."[8]

In *Menti Nostrae* the pontiff in passing urges the clergy to promote the Apostleship of Prayer. But it is especially in the three letters on the Apostleship of Prayer which Pius XII has written during his pontificate[9] that we see how the pope wishes priests to further the association. In the first letter, on the centenary of the Apostleship, he wrote:

> . . . with how much joy and consolation We learn . . . that it [the Apostleship of Prayer] has been introduced into some thirteen hundred dioceses and into parishes almost without number, with the assistance of the Most Reverend Bishops and the rest of the clergy. . . .
>
> With scarcely less consolation do We learn that . . . the Most Reverend Bishops and very many priests of the diocesan and regular clergy, zealously and generously, lend their united services toward promoting, advancing, and directing the work of this association.

The most recent recommendation of the Holy Father came Oct. 28, 1951, when Pius XII approved the new statutes of the Apostleship of Prayer. In this letter he expressly invites pastors of souls to use the Apostleship of Prayer, "a very efficacious instrument of the modern apostolic ministry, both for the salvation of the individual faithful and for the general pastoral care of souls." Since the Apostleship "contains within itself a rule and compendium for the pastoral care of souls, pastors will find the Apostleship of great value in all the varied phases of their apostolic work. . . . If the Reverend Pastors will induce the flocks committed to their care to perform constantly and devoutly the practices of the Apostleship of Prayer they will satisfy no small part of their pastoral obligations." A perusal of this letter and of the new statutes of the Apostleship of Prayer will show clearly how highly the Holy Father regards the Apostleship and how earnestly he wishes priests to promote it.[10]

---

[6] Pius XII, *Cum proxime exeat*, June 16, 1944 (*AAS*, XXXVI [1944], 238-42).

[7] Pius XII, *Quod sodales*, Sept. 19, 1948 (*AAS*, XL [1948], 500-503).

[8] Pius XII, *Pastoralis curae*, Oct. 28, 1951 (*AAS*, XLVI [1952], 365-68).

[9] Cf. the quotations in the preceding paragraph and notes 6-8.

DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Besides the frequent exhortations of the modern popes that priests foster devotion to the Sacred Heart in themselves and in their people, there are many helps given to the spiritual life of the priest himself by this devotion. In the appendix to some breviaries we find the Litany of the Sacred Heart and various prayers, among them a prayer to be said after hearing confessions: "O Lord Jesus Christ . . . each and every one who has just confessed to me, I commend to Thy most sweet Heart. . . ." In the prayer, *O clementissime Jesu*, formerly printed in the breviary for recitation after the Office, the priest prayed: "O most merciful Jesus . . . I offer this action to Thy divine Heart to be purified and perfected. . . ."

It was St. Pius X who encouraged the priest and his people to add to the prayers after Low Mass the indulgenced ejaculation: "Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us."[11]

The Raccolta gives a number of prayers for clerics and priests. Not a few of them are directed to the Sacred Heart. To candidates for the priesthood is given the invocation: "O good Jesus, grant that I may become a priest after Thine own Heart" (727). For priests this ejaculation becomes: "O good Jesus, grant that I may be a priest after Thine own Heart" (739). There is also another aspiration for all clerics: "Heart of Jesus, Victim of love, make me a living victim for Thee, holy and pleasing unto God" (729).

---

[10] Two recent articles on the Apostleship of Prayer: P. De Letter, S.J., "The Apostleship of Prayer and the Pastoral Ministry," *The Clergy Monthly,* XVII (1953), 161-69; Thomas Diehl, S.J., "At Your Service, Father!" *The Priest,* IX (1953), 419-22.

[11] *The Raccolta* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1952), nn. 242, 675. Throughout this article references to *The Raccolta* are indicated by a number in parentheses.

Priests have a special form for consecrating themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, indulgenced by Pius X and renewed under Pius XI. It reads in part: "Lord Jesus . . . we are Thine; we wish to be Thine forever: therefore to Thy Most Sacred Heart which Thou hast shown to oppressed humanity as their only safe refuge, we dedicate and devote ourselves wholly this day." Recalling the tenth promise of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary the prayer continues: "Thou who has promised plenteous fruit in the divine ministry to those priests who are devoted to Thy Sacred Heart, make us, we beseech Thee, fit workmen in Thy vineyard . . . Renew our hearts, therefore, in the fire of Thy Heart . . ." (474).

In a prayer to St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, the priest is told to pray: ". . . since thou didst catch thy flame of love from the fire burning in His Sacred Heart, we do not wonder that thou wast the only disciple to accompany Jesus in His Passion, and thereafter didst write such burning words that thou are rightly called 'the Apostle of love' . . . fired with zeal for the glory of God, may we attain to intimate fellowship with the Heart of Jesus . . ." (745).

The Raccolta also provides prayers for the sanctification of the clergy. Though intended for all the faithful, they are very appropriate prayers to be said by the priest himself for his sanctification and the sanctification of all his brother priests. A plenary indulgence may be gained on the first Thursday or first Saturday of any month, and on some other days also, for Mass, Holy Communion, and other prayers and good works offered for "priests and sacred ministers of the Church, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest, may sanctify them and make them to be priests after His own Heart . . ." (657).

An Act of Oblation reads: "O Jesus . . . we offer Thee our prayers, our actions, our sufferings in behalf of Thy priests, to the end that each day may behold the wider extension of the Kingdom of Thy Sacred Heart" (658). And another prayer:

> O Jesus, eternal High Priest, divine Sacrificer, Thou who in an unspeakable burst of love for men, Thy brethren, didst cause the Christian priesthood to spring forth from Thy Sacred Heart, vouchsafe to pour forth upon Thy priests continual living streams of infinite love. . . .

Return to us in the person of Thy priests; truly live again in them; act through them and pass once more through the world, teaching, forgiving, comforting, sacrificing and renewing the sacred bonds of love between the Heart of God and the heart of men. Amen (659).

An indulgence is also granted to "the faithful who devoutly recite the *Our Father, Hail Mary* and *Glory be to the Father* five times, in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in order to obtain the preservation of military chaplains in purity and holiness of life" (661).

Finally, there is a beautiful prayer, probably familiar to most priests, though not included in *The Raccolta:* "O Jesus, Eternal Priest, keep Your priests within the shelter of Your Sacred Heart where none may harm them . . . so possess them and live in them that every soul they come in contact with may thus become more devoted to Your Sacred Heart. . . ."

LEAGUE OF SACERDOTAL SANCTITY

In recent years a number of associations, organized for priests with the approval of the popes, have stressed devotion to the Sacred Heart as an aid to priests in their striving for perfection and a more zealous fulfillment of their obligations.[12] Among them is an organization closely connected with devotion to the Sacred Heart called the League of Sacerdotal Sanctity. It was founded in France in 1900 and is now spread throughout the world. St. Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI all encouraged the League and became members themselves. "The League of Sacerdotal Sanctity is a fraternal union of priests, diocesan and regular, who aim to further the glory and love of the Sacred Heart of Christ by fulfilling three desires which He has expressed...." The third of these desires is "*Reparation* to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, especially for the coldness and offenses of priests against Him in the Holy Eucharist. . . ." One of the conditions for membership is "to make a daily offering to the Sacred Heart of one's prayers, works, and sufferings for the above purposes of the League. . . ." Members have the privilege "of saying a private votive Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart on those First Fridays which are not feasts of Our Lord, or doubles of the first class, or privileged vigils or within a privileged octave. . . ." Among the indulgences granted to members are two which may be gained by reciting daily the *Oratio Quotidiana* to the Sacred Heart and the *Consecratio SS. Cordi Jesu.*[13]

---

[12] Recent articles describing two of these organizations: C. C. O'Connor, "Blessed Pius X and the Priests' Universal Union," *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* LXXVI (1951), 214-21; R. B. Criem, S.J., "The Apostolic Union of the Secular Priests of the Sacred Heart," *The Clergy Monthly,* XVI (1953), 79-102.

CONCLUSION

This is the appeal devotion to the Sacred Heart makes to all priests. Though necessarily brief and incomplete as presented here, it enables us to see the strong recommendations the Church makes to priests to give this devotion a special place in their individual lives. Our Lord has promised to bless all who are devoted to His Sacred Heart—to bless them personally and to bless all their undertakings. Surely a priest needs these blessings of the Sacred Heart in his life of striving toward priestly perfection and in his works of apostolic zeal. O good Jesus, grant that we may be priests according to Your Sacred Heart.

CARL J. MOELL, S.J.

West Baden College
West Baden Springs, Ind.

---

[13] These quotations are taken from the explanatory leaflet of the League.

THE DIVINE INCARNATE WORD AND THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

The Divine Scriptures are truly a treasure hidden in the field of God's Church. Only he who seeks that treasure shall find it. Centuries come and go, men examine and explain the Scriptures, defend or attack them, promote or reject them, but the divine Word of God remains imperishable, inexhaustible, eternal. Like the Son of God-made-man, it is the Word of God in human form, and striking is the relation of one to the other.

DIVINE INSTRUMENTALITY

In the making of an inspired book, two principles are at work: one divine, the other human. It is the breath of the life-giving Spirit that brings the Scriptures into existence, yet not by a creative act. A human agent is also on the scene, the chosen instrument of the Spirit, a man whose entire mind, with all its thinking and willing, all its power of narrating and describing, all its ability to argue and convince, indeed, the whole man, is at the free disposal of the Holy Spirit. It is this docile, human writing-instrument that the Holy Spirit takes up to pen His message for the children of men. Of itself that instrument can write, perhaps write well; but in the hands of God it writes a book of which God Himself is the Author. God is then the principal writer; the sacred writer His instrument. Well has Pope Leo XIII described in *Providentissimus Deus,* this "supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the sacred writer moving and impelling him to write in such a manner that he first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth all the things and only those things that the Holy Spirit wanted written."

Similarly, in the Incarnation of the Divine Word, there are two principles at work: one divine, the other human: "The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, Mary, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee" (*Luke* 1:35). Again a human being is entirely at the disposal of God, the mind and heart of this maiden, the body and soul, will and desire of this virgin are freely given to Him to be used as He desires: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to thy word" (*Luke* 1:38). It was the flesh and blood of the Virgin that the Holy Spirit made use of to accomplish His masterpiece: the Word-made-flesh. Instrumentality at its best: virginity in the hands of God to accomplish a divine maternity. No maiden, even with all her powers of womanhood and made fruitful by the mightiest of men, can bring forth anyone but a man; yet this humble maiden was enabled by the Spirit to bring forth the Son of God! *Conceptus de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine.*

UNIQUE IN ORIGIN

From the angle of origin, too, the written Word of God offers an unequaled comparison with the Incarnate Divine Word. We read the writings of David or Jeremias, Luke or Paul. Each sacred writer is assuredly the author of his work; but so is God its author. We speak of the books of Isaias, the prophet. Yet, St. Paul tells us that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks therein (*Acts* 28:25 f.). Libraries are filled with volumes of famous authors; yet the Scripture will always be the greatest of all books, for God is its author. The Holy Spirit has written these things. And what other book has God and man for its true author?

Similarly, the Incarnate Divine Word is without equal, because God and man are His natural parent: the Father His *Genitor,* Mary His *sancta Genetrix. Deus est ex substantia Patris ante saecula genitus, et homo est ex substantia matris in saeculo natus.* This is the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, the crown of all God's wonderful works, the Exemplar for all the sons of men. Begotten of the Heavenly Father and born of the Virgin Mother, He has made us brothers in the flesh (*Heb.* 2:14) and enabled us to be the very sons of God (*John* 1:13; *I John* 3:1).

SINGULAR CONSEQUENCES

On account of its divine origin, the written Word of God enjoys supreme excellence: it is without the least formal error, for such error is incompatible with divine authorship. Only too often, however, mortal men err in interpreting the Scripture, by not grasping what the sacred words were intended to convey. Moreover, the Scripture express in all correctness the will of God for man. Nothing sinful, nothing immoral, nothing contrary to God's wishes is the tenor of its message. Consequently, the Word of God is worthy of the highest tribute. Latin and Oriental Church alike give expression to their estimation of the divine Scripture. In the liturgical functions it is carried aloft, it is incensed, it is kissed. Martyrs, virgins and confessors have died with the Scripture on their bosom. Kings, presidents and potentates take a solemn oath by placing their hand on its sacred pages.

At the same time, on account of its human origin, the Scripture manifests all the human characteristics of its human authors, as long as they are compatible with Divine Truth and Holiness. The emphatic and graphic expressions of the Semite, figures and symbols, paradox and hyperbole, all mark the writer as a human being bent on expressing his thought like any other author to the best of his ability, and with all the literary devices at his disposal. There we find the polished language of Isaias and Luke, the simple diction of Amos, the complicated arguments of Paul, the trained pharisee, the abundant grammar irregularities of St. John in the Apocalypse. Truth can be expressed in language that is grammatically incorrect (dialect, pidgin-English, even slang) just as well as in the most correct and most polished diction. The author is not out to inculcate correct grammar but to impart a message.

What a close parallel there is in the Incarnate Word of God! Because of His divine origin, Jesus, the God-man, is Truth itself (*John* 14:6). Not the slightest error could proceed from that sacred mind, no clouded judgment from that intelligence. The fullness of knowledge is His, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Moreover, not only is supreme truth His prerogative, but also perfect holiness. Anything sinful, anything immoral, anything displeasing to God is incompatible with the character of the God-man. "I always do what is pleasing to My Father" (*John* 8:29). Such excellence is deserving of universal recognition, and many, even among those who have not enjoyed the gift of faith, have acknowledged the greatness of Christ. But to the God-man is due more than recognition of greatness of character. To Him is due all homage and adoration. "He is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (*Apoc.* 5:12).

At the same time, because He is born of Mary, He has all the human traits and characteristics of a true man. Since He had no human father, He must have been the perfect image of His Mother. His countenance evidenced the perfect sinlessness and utter goodness of His soul; His bearing marked Him as nobility and royalty, for such was His lineage; His gestures betrayed the Semite, as did the way in which He expressed His thoughts. For Jesus loved the parable and the picture-language of the orientals. Yet He could argue with all the keenness of a dialectician (*Matt.* 22:46), and employ all the ardor of the Semite in bringing home his point (*Matt.* 23:24-28).

Again, as a man like unto us in all things except sin (*Heb.* 4:16), He shared the common lot of human kind, all the infirmities of human nature that were not incompatible with His Divine Holiness. He was tired (*John* 4:6), He was hungry (*Matt.* 4:2). He wept (*John* 10:35). He felt keenly the sword-thrust of the traitor apostle. His Heart was the most perfect of human hearts, and hence susceptible as no other to ingratitude, neglect, hatred. Like unto us He suffered, like unto us He died. But His death meant eternal life for men.

EXEMPLARY CAUSE

The similarities between the written Word of God and the Incarnate Divine Word are undeniable. Is it merely a comparison? Or is there an inner relation intended by God between them? St. Thomas throws a ray of light on this question. Speaking of the assumed bodies which the angels took in their apparitions in the Old Testament, St. Thomas states that "hoc autem fuit quoddam figurale indicium quod Verbum Dei assumptum esset corpus humanum." Then the Angelic Doctor continues: "Omnes enim apparitiones Veteris Testamenti ad illam ordinatae fuerunt, qua Filius Dei apparuit in carne."[1] Accordingly, all apparitions of the Old Testament were directly related to the Incarnation *(qua Filius Dei apparuit in carne)*. The Incarnation, then, is the prototype for them all. *A pari*, therefore, all that takes place in prophetical and biblical inspiration in bringing about the written Word of God bears a direct relation to the Word of God in His appearing in human form. It is the Incarnation of the Word of God that is the prototype and exemplary cause which the Holy Spirit followed in bringing into existence the written Word of God.

---

[1] *Sum theol.*, I, q. 51, a. 2, *ad* 1.

Thus the Virgin with the Divine Child is the Pattern on which God models the formation of His great work, the Sacred Scriptures. Is it any wonder that the image of Mother and Child is such a favorite with Catholics, when it occupies such an important place in the Divine Mind and is so centralized in the Divine Designs?

BERNARD J. LE FROIS, S.V.D.

Techny, Illinois

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The leading article in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for October, 1904, by Father Sheedy, of Altoona, Pa., was occasioned by the Catholic Summer School, at Cliff Haven, N. Y., which had been conducted for the thirteenth year in 1904. The article is entitled "Our Clergy and the Reading Circle Movement." The writer, enthusiastic over the impetus to develop the spirit of intellectualism in Catholics encouraged by the Summer School, urges priests to form groups who will meet regularly to discuss current books of Catholic value. . . . Father Slater, S.J., writing on "Bankruptcy and Conscience," holds that in England, by virtue of the intent of the bankruptcy law, a person who has honestly declared bankruptcy is released in conscience from the debts he cannot pay, whereas in the United States one who cannot pay his creditors in full must make up the deficiency afterwards if he can. (Nowadays the opinion that in the United States the honest bankrupt is freed in conscience is sufficiently probable to be followed in practice.) . . . Professor W. Stockley, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, in his article "The Restoration of our Churches," presents a plea for genuine art in our churches. . . . The anonymous S.L.T. writes on certain articles requisite for liturgical services, such as the processional cross, the catafalque, canopies, etc. . . . In the *Analecta* we read that the one-day fast prescribed for the gaining of the jubilee indulgence of 1904 excluded the use of butter, cheese, eggs and milk, except in places where abstinence fare in the strict sense could not be procured. . . . In the *Analecta* we also find the gracious reply of St. Pius X to the letter of congratulation on his election to the papacy sent him by Cardinal Gibbons in the name of the Catholics of the United States. . . . Among the book reviews there is a notice of a work on the Immaculate Conception by Archbishop Ullathorne, the revision of which was completed by Canon Iles of Birmingham, after the death of the author.

F. J. C.

EUCHARISTIC BELIEF MANIFEST IN THE EPITAPHS OF ABERCIUS AND PECTORIUS

In the sixteenth century the pseudo-Reformers violently disrupted the unity of Christendom and, under the guise of a return to pure Gospel teaching, sealed off from vast masses of Christians the living fountain of eternal life, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and deprived them of the Holy Eucharist, the divine food and drink of immortality. Since that time learned men have diligently inquired what the Christians of early centuries professed regarding the vitally important article of faith of the Catholic Church, the doctrine that under the eucharistic species of bread and wine there is really, truly, and substantially present the Body and Blood of the Redeemer of mankind, Christ Jesus. The Holy Eucharist is indeed at the very heart of Catholicism; it is truly the hearth of Catholic life and worship; it is the divine spring of heroism and martyrdom, the inexhaustible source of spiritual life and strength that vivifies, strengthens and welds together in one bond of charity the countless masses of faithful dispersed over the world into one body, the Mystical Body of Christ which is the visible Catholic Church.

Catholic theologians and historians have kept pace with these inquiries and researches in the field of Christian Antiquity to show the unbroken chain of tradition in the oneness of faith and worship. With the increase in studies in the realm of ancient liturgical and eucharistic monuments they have shed new light on the oneness of belief in the Holy Eucharist; they have brought to light new works of ancient Christian writers hitherto unknown; they have unearthed fresh evidence in confirmation of the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine. Much of this evidence deals with archaeological discoveries pertinent to Christian life and worship of the early centuries.

For down through the centuries the faithful have ever held the same sacred belief that Christ, Son of God and Son of Virgin Mary, is verily, really and substantially present in the Eucharist. True, the liturgical rites and practices differed as to their external ceremonies in not a few localities and churches, but the dogma of the Blessed Eucharist had always remained one and the same for all these centuries. The Christians of old showed no less faith, no less piety, no less fervor than the faithful of our day toward the Holy Eucharist.

The early Christians have bequeathed to posterity monuments of their faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist that speak a language entirely their own; they are in form of inscriptions, epitaphs, paintings and sculpture. Of all the ancient Christian inscriptions bearing on the Holy Eucharist none are perhaps more eloquent than the *Epitaph of Abercius* and the *Inscription of Pectorius,* both discovered in the last century. In the pages that follow we will present a brief history of these two epitaphs, a free translation of the original texts, and explain their eucharistic message.

THE EPITAPH OF ABERCIUS

The Epitaph of Abercius, Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, Asia Minor, is the oldest eucharistic monument of stone. Since its discovery it often has been referred to as the "Queen of all ancient Christian inscriptions." The life of Bishop Abercius has been fairly well known from the acts in the *Life of Abercius* written by an anonymous author of the fourth or fifth century and preserved in a tenth-century codex of a Byzantine hagiographer, Metaphrastes.[1] The acts state that Abercius was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and that he was a traveller of considerable repute: he has journeyed far and wide to preach the Gospel and to visit the more illustrious churches of his time.[2] He visited such distant places as Syria, Nisibis, and crossed the Euphrates; but the great event of his life was his journey to the queen of all Christian communities, the Church of Rome. All his journeys had an ecclesiastical purpose, and it is likely they were connected with the Montanist movement. Upon his return to his native city he left to posterity a memorial of these travels in the form of a metrical inscription, which he himself dictated at the age of seventy-two years, and ordered it to be placed after his death on his tomb. This is the *Epitaph of Abercius,* a transcript of which is preserved in a somewhat corrupt condition in the *Life of Abercius.*

---

[1] PG cxv, col. 1211. There are extant three different versions of the life of Abercius.

[2] Such travels for the purpose of ascertaining the unity of faith in the various Christain communities were not uncommon in early times. Eusebius (*Church History* V, 22, 1 ff.) has preserved extracts from the memoirs of Hegesipus who made extensive travels to Corinth, Rome, and other important churches; he states "that he had received the same teaching from all." St. Polycarp came to Rome to consult Pope Anicetus on the question of the celebration of Easter (cf. Eusebius, *op cit.,* V, 24, 16-17). St. Irenaeus journeyed to Rome to negotiate with Pope Eleutherius in connection with the Montanist movement (cf. Eusebius, *op. cit.,* V, 3, 4; 4, 1-2).

Because of many seemingly incredible miracles and other legendary lore narrated in the acts of his life, historians looked upon the biography of Abercius with suspicion and considered it a mere legend, a pious invention, especially since the name of Abercius was not listed among the bishops of Hierapolis. Even the epitaph itself was discredited as a part of this legend.

It was not until 1882 that the inscription became a focal point of scholarly interest. In that year Sir William Ramsay of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, while on a tour of Asia Minor, discovered at Kelendres, near Synnada in Phrygia, a tombstone bearing an inscription of one Alessandros (Alexander). The inscription, dated the year 300 of the Phrygian era, which is the year 216 A.D., showed great similarity to the epitaph of Abercius in the Codex of Metaphrastes. A thorough study of these inscriptions at the hands of eminent archaeologists disclosed the fact that the inscription of Alexander was merely a copy, with minor differences, of that of Abercius. Scholars pointed out that, besides certain identical phrases, the name Alessandros was substituted for that of Aberkios (Abercius); as a result of this change, the meter of the verse did not correspond to Greek hexameter. This discovery dispelled former doubts and suspicions as to the actual existence of Abercius and of his epitaph. It indicated that the Epitaph of Abercius was genuine and that it could belong to the second century, just as the acts of his life have stated.

Spurred on by this discovery, the eminent Catholic archaeologist of the past century, John B. De Rossi, publicly invited William Ramsay to return once again to Asia Minor and make diligent search for any extant fragment of the original inscription of Abercius. The following year, in 1883, William Ramsay discovered in the city of Hieropolis two fragments of the actual tombstone of Abercius; they were found built into the masonry of the public baths. With the help of the inscription of Alexander and the extant acts of Abercius, scholars were able to reconstruct the entire inscription with the exception of a few more or less doubtful words. In 1892 Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey donated one fragment to Pope Leo XIII on the occasion of the Supreme Pontiff's golden sacerdotal jubilee; the other fragment was presented to him by Sir William Ramsay himself. They are now preserved in the Lateran Museum.

The discoveries of Ramsay have placed beyond doubt the authenticity of the Epitaph of Abercius. They also proved that he was bishop, not of Hierapolis, as erroneously transcribed in the codexes and as previous scholars had assumed, but of the less important city of Hieropolis; and further that he was none other than Avircius Marcellus mentioned by Eusebius in his *Church History* (V, 16, 3)—a well-known anti-Montanist leader of such great esteem that he was reckoned a great wonderworker two centuries after his death.

The Epitaph of Abercius was set up a good many years before 216 A.D., the date of the inscription of Alexander; very likely about 192, the year in which an anonymous writer dedicated an anti-Montanist work to him.[3] The twenty-two verses of the epitaph summarize the life, deeds and travels of Bishop Abercius; his journey to Rome is singled out as a major event. The inscription itself is couched in mystical and symbolical language—the language of early Christians which, according to the prevailing Discipline of the Secret, served to conceal the mysteries of faith from the uninitiated.

The following is the text of the Epitaph of Abercius in a free translation. Verses 7-15 represent the discovery of William Ramsay:

1 The citizen of an eminent city, this monument I made
2 whilst still living, that there I might have in time a resting place
for my body.
3 My name is Abercius, the disciple of the holy shepherd
4 who feeds his flocks of sheep on the mountains and in the plains,
5 who has great eyes that see everywhere.
6 This shepherd taught me the Book worthy of belief.
7 It is he who sent me to Rome to behold the royal majesty

---

[3] Eusebius, *op. cit.*, V, 16, 2.

8 and to see the queen arrayed in golden vestments and golden sandals.
9 There also I saw the people famous for their seal.
10 And I saw the plains of Syria and all its cities, and also Nisibis
11 when I crossed the Euphrates. Everywhere I met brethren in agreement,
12 having Paul [as my companion].[4] Everywhere faith was my guide
13 and everywhere provided as my food the Fish
14 of exceeding great size and pure whom the spotless virgin caught from the spring.
15 And faith ever gives this food to his disciples to eat,
16 having the choicest wine and administering the mixed drink with bread.
17 I, Abercius, standing by, ordered these words to be inscribed,
18 being in the course of my seventy second year.
19 Let him who understands these words and believes the same pray for Abercius.
20 No one shall place another tomb over my grave;
21 but if he do so, he shall pay to the treasury of the Romans two thousand pieces of gold
22 and to my beloved native city Hieropolis, one thousand pieces of gold.

In keeping with the Discipline of the Secret, the Epitaph of Abercius is crowded with information on matters of faith and religious practice enshrined in mystical and symbolical terms that were readily understood by the baptized, but remained unintelligible to the average pagan reader. As a rule the early Christians were never wont to divulge to the heathen public the great mysteries of faith, particularly what concerned the sacraments of Christian initiation, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the contents of the Creed, etc. Discourses on such subjects were reserved for the illuminated, that is, those who received the sacrament of Baptism. This practice continued for several centuries. Thus St. Cyril of Jerusalem, addressing the *"competentes,"* says: "Now when the catechizing has taken place, should a catechumen ask what the teachers have said, tell nothing to a stranger; for we deliver to thee a mystery, even the hope of life to come: keep the mystery for Him who pays thee. . . . See thou let out nothing; not that the things spoken do not deserve telling, but the ear that hears does not deserve receiving."[5] Origen, the great master of the Alexandrian School, remarks: "Those who are initiated understand these things."[6] Abercius himself purposely dictated his inscription in such wise that only his co-religionists understood its meaning: "Let him who understands these words and believes the same pray for Abercius" (v. 19); in other words, not all understand the meaning of the inscription, but fellow-believers do; for them it is meet to pray for the dead.

---

[4] This verse lacks a word or two. The words enclosed by brackets are supplied by the translator.

In the light of the foregoing, the eucharistic message of the Epitaph of Abercius is clear. The holy shepherd, of whom Abercius calls himself a disciple, is none other than Christ, the Good Shepherd.[7] He has sent him on a mission to Rome to see the Church, "the queen arrayed in golden vestments and golden sandals," famous for its faith and for its founders. Faith was his guide on his journeys to the many Christian communities; everywhere he went, he met those who professed the same belief. The food which his co-believers offered him everywhere was not the ordinary food, but the eucharistic food under the species of bread and wine. Abercius describes this food with one word: it is ἴχθυς, literally meaning *fish,* but to the early Christians it meant Christ Himself: Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour—the meaning of the acrostic IXΘYΣ. The fish was the symbol of Christ and of the eucharistic banquet: Christ is the "ἴχθυς of exceeding great size and pure whom the spotless virgin brought forth from a spring" (v. 14). The faithful on their part are, in the language of Tertullian, "little fishes": "Nos pisciculi secundum ἰχθὺν nostrum

---

[5] *Procatechesis* 12.—We know from other ancient Christian sources that such discretion on the part of ecclesiastical authorities was prompted by the Lord's injunction: "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast your pearls before the swine" (*Matt.* 7:6). St. Cyprian remarks that "we are commanded also to keep what is holy within our own knowledge, and not to expose it to be trodden upon by swine and dogs, the Lord thus speaking and saying, 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine,' lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you" (*Ad Demetrianum* 1). Cf. *Didache* ix, 5.

[6] *Hom. in Exod.* viii, 4: "Quae norunt qui initiati sunt"; *Hom. in Levit.* ix, 10: "Novit qui mysteriis imbutus est."

[7] Cf. *John* x, 11.—The figure of a shepherd, often depicted with a lamb on his shoulders, is one of the most common representations of Christ in ancient Christian art and sculpture.

Jesum Christum in aqua nascimur."[8] The spotless Virgin who caught the Fish from the spring is, according to the symbolism of the time, the Virgin Mary who conceived the Savior.[9] The eucharistic food, then, is Christ Himself, the great and pure ΙΧΘΥΣ which is given only to the initiated and is administered under both species of bread and wine—the Body and Blood of Our Savior: "administering the mixed drink with bread" (v. 16). The "mixed drink" (Gr.: *κέρασμα*) doubtless refers to the cup of wine mixed (tempered) with water; together with bread it constitutes the eucharistic *oblata*.[10]

THE INSCRIPTION OF PECTORIUS

The inscription of Pectorius is reckoned among the finest eucharistic discoveries of early Christianity. In 1839 seven fragments of a marble gravestone bearing the inscription of Pectorius were found in an old cemetery in the vicinity of Autun, in Southern France. The celebrated Catholic liturgical scholar Dom J. P. Pitra, later Cardinal, was the first to have studied this epitaph and published it in 1852;[11] in time a great number of other scholars made diligent researches into its date, language and contents.

In style, phraseology and symbolical language the Inscription of Pectorius greatly resembles that of Abercius. It is a Greek metrical composition of eleven verses in which two distinct parts can easily be discerned: the first is composed of three distichs which differ in meter and style from the remaining five hexameters which form the second part of the inscription. The first six verses are of doctrinal character and address the reader; the last five are of a more personal nature: Pectorius dedicates the inscription to his deceased parents and brothers who rest "in the peace of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior," and prays that they remember him. The fragments of the inscription are presently in the museum of Autun.

---

[8] *De Baptismo* 1.

[9] Cf. J. Wilpert, *La Fede della Chiesa Nascente,* Città del Vaticano 1938.

[10] Cf. Justin, *Apologia* I, 61, 3, where bread and a chalice containing wine mixed with water (ποιήριον κράματος) is offered in the celebration of Eucharist.

[11] Cf. *supra,* n. 12.

The Greek text of the inscription has a prominent feature which is entirely lost in an English translation, namely, the first letters of the words introducing each of the first five verses from the word **ΙΧΘΥΣ** and thus bind the verses together. This word not only opens the first verse, but also appears in the text of the sixth, seventh and eleventh verse. We may well assume that such an order and symbolism were not accidental; they conveyed to the mind of the Christians a message guarded in terms they well understood.

The date of the Inscription of Pectorius is less certain than that of Abercius. Cardinal Pitra and John B. De Rossi date it to the beginning of the second century; others, not later than the fourth. If we consider the place of its discovery, its Greek language which, from the beginning of the third century, began to decline in popular usage in the West, and its symbolism, the time of its origin can be placed in the declining years of the second or early third century.

The text of the inscription freely translated reads as follows:

1 Thou, the divine child of the heavenly Fish
2 Keep pure thy heart among the mortals
3 Once thou hast been washed in the fountain of divine waters.
Refresh thy soul, friend,
4 With the ever flowing waters of wealth-giving wisdom.
5 Take from the Redeemer of saints the honey-sweet food;
6 Eat with joy and desire, holding the Fish in thy hands.
7 I pray thee, Lord Savior, satisfy his hunger with the Fish.
8 May my mother rest peacefully, I beseech thee, Light of the dead.
9 Aschandius, father, my heart's beloved
10 With my dearest mother and my brothers
11 In the peace of the Fish remember thy Pectorius.

The inscription of Pectorius is indeed a precious gem of ancient Christian epigraphy and one of the most eloquent lapidary monuments of early Christian faith in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. In it Pectorius hails the Christian as one of a race apart from others, of the race of Jesus Christ: "the divine child of the heavenly **ΙΧΘΥΣ**." In the immortal fountain of divine waters he is regenerated unto a new life which is henceforth nourished with the eucharistic food, "the honey-sweet food of the Redeemer of saints" (v. 5). This food sweet as honey is the **ΙΧΘΥΣ** Himself, Christ Jesus, whom under the appearance of bread the

Christian receives into his hands whenever he partakes of this spiritual nourishment. The Christian is invited to partake of this food: "Eat with joy and desire, holding the Fish in thy hands" (v. 6), that is, holding Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, in thy hands.

The words "holding the Fish in thy hands" refer to the ancient liturgical custom according to which the faithful received the Holy Eucharist directly into their hands and then consumed It. St. Cyril of Jerusalem describes minutely this liturgical rite in his mystagogical catechesis to the neophytes. He instructs them in these words:

> Approaching, therefore, come not with thy palms extended and stretched flat nor with thy fingers open; but make thy left hand as if a throne for the right, and hollowing thy palm receive the Body of Christ, saying after it, Amen. Then after thou hast with care sanctified thine eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake thereof, giving heed lest thou lose any particle of it; for shouldest thou lose any of it, it is as though thou hast lost a member of thy own body. For tell me, if any one gave thee gold dust, wouldest thou not with all precaution keep it fast, being on the guard lest thou lose any of it and thus suffer loss? How much more cautiously then wilt thou observe that not a crumb falls from thee, of what is more precious than gold and precious stones? . . . Then after having partaken of the Body of Christ, approach also to the Cup of His Blood; not extending thy hands, but bending low and saying in the way of worship and reverence, Amen, be thou sanctified by partaking also of the Blood of Christ.[12]

The same custom was observed in the Church of Alexandria. It is explicitly mentioned by St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, in his letter to Pope Xystus. Dionysius has sought counsel of the Bishop of Rome in the case of one who, having been baptized by heretics, begged the bishop to receive the sacrament of Baptism according to the duly recognized rites of Christian initiation. St. Dionysius informs Pope Xystus that he has refused this petition on the grounds that the man has already been initiated into the Christian religion and for many years has faithfully participated in the eucharistic Offering: "For since he had heard the Thanksgiving and joined in saying the Amen, and stood beside the Table and stretched forth his hands to receive the holy food, and had received it and partaken of the Body and Blood of our Lord for a long time, I should not dare to build him up again from the beginning."[13] St. Cyprian attests to the observance of this custom in the African churches.[14]

---

[12] *Catech. Mystagog.* 5, 21-22.

CONCLUSION

The epitaphs of Abercius and Pectorius, set up in countries far apart, evidence wonderful agreement among the Christians both in the East and in the West in the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist—doctrine which the Catholic Church has ever professed, inculcated, expounded and jealously guarded through the centuries. The works of the Fathers of the Church, ancient Christian art, epigraphy, and liturgical documents all conspire without any discordant note in one harmonious belief that the faithful receive the very Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

As long as the Discipline of the Secret was in full vigor and forbade unveiling what was contained and received in the eucharistic synaxis, the reality of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine could not be disclosed to the heathen in the epitaphs of Abercius and Pectorius. Hence the symbolism of the fish, so widely used in Christian Antiquity, and the acrostic **ΙΧΘΥΣ**, so sacred to early Christians, served as a tessera and credential letters by means of which they recognized each other wherever they went; a sign which gained them entrance to the liturgical Synaxes where the faithful partook at the sacred Table of the heavenly Fish, that is, of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

The faith of Abercius and Pectorius, which gave them the honey-sweet food of the Redeemer of saints, is the same faith which inspired the holy Bishop-Martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch to write in the beginning of the second century: "I desire the bread of God which is the flesh of Jesus Christ (born) of the seed of David, and the drink that I long for is His Blood which is incorruptible charity";[15] the Eucharistic Bread "is the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we may not die, but live for ever in Jesus Christ."[16] It is the same faith to which St. Ambrose attests in the fourth century: "This food which thou receivest is the living bread which came down from heaven, and furnisheth the substance of eternal life; and whosoever eateth this, shall never die: and it is the Body of Christ";[17] "With these sacraments [i.e. the eucharistic bread and wine], therefore, Christ feeds his Church; by them the soul's very being is strengthened."[18] It is the same faith to which St. Cyril of Jerusalem bears witness: "Since then He Himself has declared and said of the Bread, 'This is My Body,' who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since He has affirmed and said, 'This is My Blood,' who shall ever hesitate, saying, that it is not His Blood? . . . Therefore with fullest assurance let us partake of the Body and Blood of Christ: for in the figure of Bread is given to thee His Body, and in the figure of Wine His Blood; that thou partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, mightest be made of the same body and the same blood with Him. For thus we come to bear Christ in us, because His Body and Blood are diffused through our members."[19] It is the same faith which the Council of Trent solemnly teaches: "after the consecration of bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained in the august sacrament of the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of those sensible things."[20] Lastly, it is the same faith which today gives the same spiritual food and nourishment to His true followers. It is the Food of which Christ has spoken:

---

[13] Eusebius, *op. cit.* VII, 9, 4.

[14] *De Lapsis* 16, 22; *De Bono Patientiae* 14. See A. D'Alès, *La Théologie de Saint Cyprien* (Paris 1922), 266-271; Batiffol, *op. cit.*, 228-229, 245.

[15] *Epist. ad Ephesios* vii, 3.

> I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. . . . Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life. My flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.[21]

GREGORY GRABKA, O.F.M.Conv.

St. Hyacinth Seminary
Granby, Mass.

---

[16] *Ibid.*, xx, 2.

[17] *De Mysteriis* 8, n. 47.

[18] *Ibid.*, 9, n. 55; cf. *De Sacramentis* IV, 4, n. 13-20.

[19] *Catech. Mystagog.* 4, 1, 3.

[20] Sessio XIII, cap. 1. *DB.* 874.

[21] *John,* 6:51, f.; 54 ff.

MARY, EVER-VIRGIN

PART II

II. *Mary remained a virgin* in partu

(A) This aspect of Our Blessed Mother's virginity largely is proved from the sources already cited. Thus, the Creeds say that Christ *was born* of the Virgin;[46] at His birth, then, His mother was a virgin according to Christian faith. The Lateran Council defined that Mary is *ever Virgin;*[47] Leo the Great[48] had already taught that Christ was begotten from the Virgin's womb, as Paul IV[49] and others were to repeat.

(B) Scripture evidences this truth. Isaias foretold that a *Virgin* would conceive *and* (as a virgin) *bear* a son.[50] St. Matthew says that Mary's *begetting* Christ fulfilled this prophecy.[51] St. Luke, as though to emphasize Mary's virginity in Christ's birth, writes that she herself wrapped Him, and placed Him in a manger,[52] functions a mother could not ordinarily perform immediately after a normal childbirth.

(C) Among the Fathers, who are the voice of Catholic tradition, the virginity of Mary *in partu* is taught by St. Irenaeus,[53] St. Clement of Alexandria,[54] Origen,[55] St. Basil,[56] St. Gregory Nazianzenus,[57] St. Epiphanius;[58] and, in the West, by St. Hilary,[59] St. Jerome,[60] St. Ambrose,[61] St. Augustine,[62] St. Chrysologus,[63] St. Leo the Great,[64] St. Fulgentius, [65] St. Gregory the Great,[66] and others. Again, we have the dilemma—either Our Lady was indeed a Virgin even in bringing forth the Son of God, or the inspired word of God deceives, Christian tradition is in error and the Church has lost the Spirit of truth which Christ promised to it forever.

---

[46] Cf. *DB,* 2, 6, 16.
[47] *DB,* 256.
[48] *DB,* 144.
[49] *DB,* 993.
[50] *Isaias* 7:14.
[51] *Matt.* 7:20-23.
[52] *Luke* 2:7.
[53] *Adv. haereses,* 4, c. 33, n. 11 (*MPG,* VII, 1080).
[54] *Stromata* 7, c. 16 (*MPG,* IX, 530 ff.).
[55] *Com. in Matt.,* c. 10, n. 17 (*MPG,* XIII, 876).
[56] *Com. in Isaiam,* n. 201 (*MPG,* XXX, 465).
[57] *Orat.* 40 (*MPG,* XXXVI, 424).
[58] *Adv. haereses panarium,* 30, 20 (*MPG,* XLI, 437).
[59] *De Trinitate* 3, c. 19 (*MPL,* X, 87).
[60] *Epist.* 48, 21 (*MPL,* XXII, 510).
[61] *Epist.* 42, *ad Siricium papam* (*MPL,* XVI, 1125 ff.).
[62] *Epist.* 137, 2 (*MPL,* XXXIII, 519).
[63] *Sermo 117 (MPL,* LII, 520).
[64] *Sermo 22 (MPL,* LIV, 195).
[65] *Epist.* 17, c. 6, M. 12 (*MPL,* LXV, 457).
[66] *Moralia,* 18, c. 52, n. 85 (*MPL,* LXXVI, 89).

(D) Most of the diverse aspects of fitness which have been pointed out with respect to Mary's virginity *ante partum* held also for her virginity *in partu*.[67]

First, within the Godhead the Word is not only conceived but also brought forth by the Father, without any lessening or destroying of the Father's infinite perfection. Since Christ is the Word of God in human flesh, the visible manifestation of the invisible mysteries of God, ought He not in His humanity, too, to come forth from His begettor without diminution of her sacred perfection? Since, again, He came precisely as the restorer of our last perfection it is most proper that coming among us He should not take away anything of the integral perfection of His mother.

The virgin birth of Christ is in the strict sense miraculous. It implies the simultaneous presence of distinct bodies in one place. For this only divine power can account, for by nature's laws the distinct identity of bodies demands that they have distinct places.[68] Yet as the Sacred Body of the Lord came forth, It remained distinct, compenetrating Mary's holy body; for in her was no distress, no destruction of the seal of her perfect virginity.

III *Mary remained a virgin* post partum

(A) While this is the aspect of Our Lady's virginity most frequently attacked, it is no less certain than her virginity before or at the birth of Christ. It, too, is *de fide*.

In the exposition of the Nicene Creed attributed to Epiphanius we read "we believe . . . in Jesus Christ . . . who was incarnate, that is perfectly begotten of Mary *ever virgin* through the Holy Ghost."[69] And in the dogmatic letter of Pope John II "we teach that the glorious, holy, *ever virgin* Mary is rightly and truly professed by Catholics to be . . . the mother of the Word of God. . . ."[70] The second Council of Constantinople defined "If anyone shall not confess that there are two nativities of the Word of God one . . . from the Father . . . the other . . . from the holy glorious Mother of God and *ever Virgin* Mary . . . let such a one be anathema."[71] Very clearly the Lateran Council of 649 defined "if anyone shall not confess . . . the holy mother of God, ever virgin and immaculate Mary . . . to have conceived . . . and borne God the Word . . . her virginity remaining inviolable after her child-bearing, let him be condemned."[72] Later the Creed of Pope Leo IX stated, "I believe also in the Son of God the Father, the Word . . . born of the Holy Ghost from Mary *ever virgin*."[73] The fourth Lateran Council defined "the only-begotten Son of God Jesus Christ . . . *conceived by Mary ever virgin*. . . ."[74]

---

[67] Cf. *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 28, a. 2.

[68] Cf. *Supp.*, q. 2, a. 83. For all bodily things the principle of individuation is *materia quantitate signata*. Quantity *per se* demands *situs* for as quantity interiorly distinguishes material part from material part so it also distinguishes as to *situs* one whole body from another. If in the natural order we try to imagine compenetration of bodies we are removing something required for their distinction one from another: we are identifying the bodies.

[69] *DB*, 13.

We have the express words also of Pope Siricius, writing in 392, indicating horror at the *heretical* teaching "that from the same virginal womb out of which Christ was born according to the flesh, another childbirth should come."[75] There is also the clear teaching of Pope Sixtus IV that "she remained the immaculate Virgin after child-birth."[76] Finally there is the most clear teaching of Paul IV condemning the view that ". . . the Virgin Mary . . . did not remain always in virginal integrity, before giving birth, in giving birth, and perpetually after having given birth."[77]

(B) One basis for this uninterrupted teaching of the Church is Sacred Scripture itself. Our Lady's answer to the Angel Gabriel "I know not man" was stated not as a mere fact which could be readily altered, but as a difficulty in the way of Mary's motherhood. It clearly manifests that Mary *intends* to know no man: only that intention could be a real difficulty in the way of motherhood to a woman already espoused to her husband. If that intention was an obstacle to Mary's motherhood of Christ it surely would impede her ever ceasing to be a virgin. Thus her words either indicate her intention of remaining forever a virgin, or they would be, coming from the lips of an espoused woman, inane. Again, when on Calvary Christ, soon to surrender even His human life, sought to provide for His Mother to whom could He turn?

---

[70] *DB*, 202.
[71] *DB*, 214.
[72] *DB*, 256.
[73] *DB*, 344.
[74] *DB*, 429.
[75] *DB*, 91.
[76] *DB*, 734.
[77] *DB*, 993.

There were no other children of Mary to whose care she could be given; had there been, He who was so exact in His observance of the law would have given her to them whose obligations to her would have been primary. But only to that other virgin, John, could Christ say "Behold Thy mother."[78]

(C) There is moreover the testimony of many of the Fathers of the Church. Origen, for example, expressly teaches Mary's virginity *post partum.*[79] And St. Ephraem cries out to Mary "Thou has borne, according to the flesh, God, and the Word, preserving virginity before giving birth, and Virgin after having given birth."[80] St. Hilary called "irreligious" and "altogether alien from spiritual doctrine" those who taught that Mary did not remain a Virgin always.[81] St. Zeno put it succinctly "Mary as . . . virgin conceived; having conceived, as a virgin she gave birth; having brought forth she remained a virgin."[82] St. John Chrysostom argued carefully and strongly against those who tried to see in the Scriptures any implication that Mary was not ever-virgin.[83] Epiphanius is severe in censuring those who taught such error, calling it "unheard of insanity, and preposterous novelty."[84] Such doctrine Ambrose calls a "great sacrilege."[85] Among other great Fathers who expressly inculcate Mary's perpetual virginity are, for example, St. Jerome,[86] St. Augustine,[87] St. Cyril of Alexandria,[88] St. Peter Chrysologus,[89] Pope St. Leo the Great,[90] Gennadius,[91] St. Sophronius,[92] and St. John Damascene.[93]

---

[78] *John* 19:27.

[79] *Com. in Matt.,* 10, n. 17 (*MPG,* XIII, 876).

[80] *Oratio ad sanctissimum Dei matrem, Ench. Pat.,* 745

[81] *Com. in Matt.,* 1, n. 3 (*MPL,* IX, 921).

[82] *Tractatus,* 2, tract. 8, n. 2 (*MPL,* XI, 414 f.).

[83] *Com. in Matt.,* hom. 5 (*MPG,* LVII, 58).

[84] *Adv. haereses panarium,* 78 (*MPG,* XLII, 706).

[85] *De institutione virginum,* c. 5, n. 35 (*MPL,* XVI, 328).

[86] *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae* (*MPL,* XXIII, 191 ff.).

[87] *Sermo 186,* n. 1 (*MPL,* XXXVIII, 999).

[88] *Adversus nolentes confiteri B. Virginem esse Deiparam* (*MPG,* LXXVI, 260). [89] *Sermo 117* (*MPL,* LII, 520). [90] *Sermo 22 (MPL,* LIV, 195).

[91] *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum,* 35 (*MPL,* LVIII, 996).

[92] *Epist. synodica ad Sergium (MPG,* LXXXVII, 3172).

[93] *Hom. in dormitionem B.V. Mariae,* 2, 18 (*MPG,* XCVI, 784).

One must admit the difficulty which occasioned some of the Patristic discussion of this question. There are of course certain phrases found in the Gospels, more notably these: Christ is called "the first born" of Mary;[94] Mary is said to have been found with Child *before* she and Joseph had come together;[95] Joseph did not know her *until* she had brought forth her first-born son;[96] several places in Sacred Scripture refer to the brethren and sisters of Jesus.[97]

The description of Christ as Mary's firstborn *(primogenitus)* carries no true implication that Mary subsequently had other children. In Hebrew law and language even an only son was technically "the firstborn"; the legal prescriptions for his "redemption" had to be carried out, though he never had brethren. This is evident from the Scriptures themselves.[98] In any case archeological discoveries report a memorial to a Jewish woman who died in bringing forth her "first born"[99]—obviously her only son.

St. Matthew's phrase "before they had come together" more probably refers to the fact that at the time of the Incarnation Mary was not yet in Joseph's house but only espoused to him; the marriage ceremony had not yet been completed.[100] Too, such temporal phrases as "before," "until," were used simply to express what was not done before a given time, without implying that it was afterwards done. This argument was already developed in the days of St. Jerome;[101] it was stated especially well by St. John Chrysostom.[102] He points to Genesis 8:7, saying that the raven sent from the ark by Noe "did not return till the waters were dried up upon the earth"[103]—that is, it simply did not return ever. And in II Kings 6:23 we read that "Michoe the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death." Surely—and it is said in all reverence—she had none after her death.

The phrases "brethren of the Lord" and "sisters of Christ" again simply do not prove the point. Neither the Hebrew language, certainly the Aramaic which Christ and His Apostle spoke has no proper word for *cousin;* cousins are called "brother" and "sister"; even uncle and nephew are termed "brethren" as in the case of Abraham and Lot, and Laban and Jacob.[104]

---

[94] *Luke* 2:7; *Matt.* 1:25.
[95] *Matt.* 1:18.
[96] *Matt.* 1:25.
[97] *Matt.* 12:46; 13:55 ff.; *Mark* 3:31; 6:3; *Luke* 8:20; *John* 2:12; 7:3.
[98] *Num.* 3:47 ff.; 18:15; *Exod.* 1:32 ff.
[99] Cf. Roschini, *op. cit.,* III, 262.
[100] Cf. *Matt.* 1:20-24.
[101] *Com. in Matt.,* 1, c. 1 (*MPG,* XXVI, 25).
[102] *Com. in Matt.,* hom. 5 (*MPG,* LVII, 58).
[103] *Gen.* 13:8; 14:16.

Of all these phrases it can be said that they do not prove that Our Lady at any time ceased to be a virgin; other interpretations are altogether reasonable and fully in accord with the divinely revealed truth of Mary's perpetual virginity.

(D) What is the special fitness of the enduring virginity of Our Lady even after the truth of Christ? First, any subsequent maternity of Our Lady would be "derogatory to the perfection of Christ; for as He is in His divine nature the only-begotten of the Father . . . so it was fitting He should be the only-begotten of his mother."[105] Again the principle is clear: since the humanity of Christ is for the sake of showing forth the life of God, so His human origin ought to reflect His divine origin.

Second, this would be as it were "an affront to the Holy Ghost whose temple was the virginal womb in which He had formed the body of Christ; wherefore it was unfitting that it should be desecrated by intercourse."[106]

Third, it would "be derogatory to the dignity and sanctity of the Mother of God, who would seem most ungrateful if she were not content with so great a Son, and if she should freely lose that virginity which had been miraculously preserved."[107]

Last, on the part of St. Joseph, a rather terrible presumption would have been involved had he attempted to violate her whom he knew to have conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.

From a profound consideration of Our Lady's perpetual virginity Christian theologians as a whole have concluded that Mary had bound herself by a true vow of perfect virginity. Several reasons make any other supposition practically untenable.

In the first place Our Lady's objection to Gabriel "How shall this be done because I know not man" has real meaning only on this supposition. Those words, as we have seen, imply that Our Lady has not yet known man, and that she does not intend to—that virginity obviously would be no obstacle to motherhood unless she intended to preserve it. But in the context the words imply even more: God's angel had just told Mary she was most pleasing to God, that God had selected her to be Mother of the Messias; yet even to that, even to God's will, her virginity was an obstacle! She said in effect "I *cannot* know man." Her virginity could be an impediment to God's desires, only if God Himself has rights with respect to her virginity; only, that is, if that virginity were already vowed to God. Nothing short of God's rights could be urged by the holiest of women as preventing what God asked.

---

[104] *Gen.* 29:15.

[105] *Sum. theol.,* III, q. 28, a. 3.

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] *Ibid.*

Among some of the Fathers this understanding is clear. St. Augustine wrote "She would not have said this unless she had previously vowed her virginity to God."[108] And St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the previous dedication and consecration of her body to God.[109] St. Bernard mentions her "fixed vow" or purpose of virginity.[110]

This teaching is most reasonable. We know in general that Our Lady was from the beginning endowed with such spiritual perfection that she surpassed all God's angels and saints. Therefore, the highest mode and degree of sanctity must be attributed to her. Christian teaching leaves no doubt that virginity vowed to God is notably more sacred than a mere *de facto* intention of preserving virginity, without such a vow. For the vow in the first place is an act of the virtue of religion, which in itself is the noblest of all moral virtues, far nobler than virginity; hence the vow gives to the virginity a splendor, a sanctity, it would otherwise lack. Again the vow implies a completeness of even bodily subjection to God; it implies sacrificing to God not alone the use of one's sexual powers but even the right or moral power to use them, for the vow dedicates them entirely to God. Consequently it guarantees a sworn fixity of purpose, an undeviating execution of the virginity one has undertaken.[111]

Since for these reasons vowed virginity is far holier than mere intended virginity, it must be predicated of that woman who is endowed with a most noble holiness. The fixing of the precise time at which Our Lady made this vow would be quite impossible, but it seems at least likely that it was rather early in her life, perhaps, immediately after she, in a normal course, came to realize the nature of sexual activity and the special beauty and sanctity of virginity.[112]

---

[108] *De sancta virginitate,* 4 (*MPL,* XL, 398).

[109] *Oratio in diem nativitatis Christi* (*MPG,* XLVI, 1140).

[110] *Sermo 4 de assumptione B. Mariae* (*MPG,* CLXXXIII, 120).

[111] Cf. *Sum. theol.,* II-II, q. 138, a. 5, 6.

THE MYSTERY OF MARY'S VIRGINITY

Christian virginity is always the expression of love's daring, one might almost say, love's heedlessness. Such virginity is the will, from sheer love of God, to live in God's love alone and without regard for the body's yearning for more human affection. True virginity has, always, something of heroism. Since Christian tradition calls Our Lady not only Virgin, but Virgin of Virgins, hers is a heroism which only begins where that of all others leaves off. She is the solitary mountain peak, the peak which alone pierces the heavens. The towering grandeur of her virginity is the sign of the enormity of her love.

This is clear from Christian tradition. Yet there is more, somehow, to Mary's virginity even than that. Christian truth has insisted not just on the fact that Mary is ever virgin; it has distinguished three phases or aspects of her virginity namely *ante partum, in partu, post partum.* Is there a special meaning, a distinct part of a total mystery involved in each of these separate aspects? The constant fact of the doctrinal distinction would lead us to surmise that there may be. What special quality of each phase of Mary's holy virginity can be discerned?

First, Mary's unique degree of virginity *ante partum* is, as we have said, the proof of that sanctity wherein she is, among all created persons, the most like unto God. That is constant in every phase of her virginity. What is peculiar to her virginity *ante partum* is this: it includes the moment of the Annunciation. It includes therefore this divine mystery: that human goodness has, as it were, drawn down to itself the living God. That is why St. Thomas represents Our Lady's purity or sanctity as being so great that God Himself came to dwell in her as in one creaturely thing that was really worthy to be His dwelling, His home.[113] God dwells, through an accident called grace, in the souls of all the just; but such was the justice of Mary, the sanctity of her body—her virginity—that it drew God to dwell *substantially* even within her virginal womb. God took to Himself, as sacred, even her flesh. Again, St. Thomas writes most soberly "The more any one is detached from fleshly things the more such a person is filled with spiritual goods. . . . Since therefore the forming of the body of Christ was to be accomplished by the Holy Ghost, it was fitting that the woman from whom Christ took His body be utterly filled with spiritual gifts so that not only would her soul be graced with virtues . . . but her womb also would be made fruitful with divine offspring. Therefore . . . her body had to be free from every taint of carnal concupiscence."[114] Mary's virginity, then, was such as truly, really, to dispose her for the action of God Himself within her body; it was an aptness to draw God to live substantially, physically within her. Surely there is mystery here, the mystery of created beauty, a spiritual loveliness so great that God Himself is enamored of His handiwork and possesses it for His own. Truly "the Lord of all things hath loved her so that he could say 'Her have I loved, and have sought her out . . . and I became a lover of her beauty.' "[115]

---

[112] Cf. Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

[113] Cf. *Opus. VI, Comm. in Ave Maria.*

What then is the mystery of Mary's virginity *ante partum?* It is the profoundest of mysteries, the mystery of God's loving of us. It is the mystery of God's stooping to embrace a beauty He had made but which is infinitely less than its Maker. And always, by His embrace, God raises yet far higher the nobility He has loved.

Second, and with regard to man generally, this aspect of Mary's original state whispers of another mystery, that she is indeed the Mother of all living, but never the Mother of death. Always, natural conception is the instrument for the transmission of sin; human parents, co-operating in the conception of natural life, necessarily conspire, too, for the propagation of sin. But the Virgin in conceiving, *because* she is Virgin, co-operated in the giving of human life utterly without sin! As she, virginally conceiving the Christ, the Head of all Mankind, gave unto Him our human life, and life without the seed of death, so does she give to us, His members, a sharing of His life, and the expelling of all sin.

There is a special aspect of mystery and of meaning in this also that Our Lady is a Virgin *in partu.* There is first of course the miracle beyond all nature, that we have already noted. Nothing short of omnipotence suspending the operation of the laws of physical nature can account for the issuing forth of offspring from a body which even in that time remains virginal, uncorrupted in the slightest degree.

---

[114] *Comp. theol.,* c. 221.

[115] *Wis.* 8:2, 3.

Even more impressive is the spiritual reality here involved. Mary's vow of virginity, springing from the love of God, had rendered normal motherhood impossible to Mary. Motherhood especially to a young girl of that day was the most desirable of vocations; so much so that many very weighty authors teach that Mary was the first woman ever to make a vow of virginity. But her love of God was equal, more than equal, to sacrificing even the most honored and most honorable function and title a woman could bear.

But God's love of Mary made return to her for what she had offered Him. It was her virginity that rendered her receptive of the Motherhood of God. She had surrendered the right to the usual parenthood; God repaid her by giving to her, through her surrender, divine maternity.

What splendor of hope this involves for all the children of Mary. The little that we can offer, God will accept and divinize. And in this virginal maternity we find achieved the resolution of that struggle which wearies us always, the struggle between flesh and spirit. The hard-won mastery of ourselves—if it ever is mastery—is not a denial of natural good. It is a transformation which brings with it something of God's life.

Lastly, Mary's virginity *in partu* is the symbol of her spiritual motherhood of us. In joy, not in anguish, Mary brought forth Christ, unto joy: "He hath set his tabernacle in the sun, and he . . . hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way."[116] It was so that Christ began His earthly course of life. And, it is unto joy everlasting that Mary brings us forth even into the joy of heaven.

In Mary's virginity *post partum,* too, there is involved true mystery. Insight into it is given in St. Thomas' words (already quoted above) that as Christ is "in His divine nature the only-begotten of the Father, as in all things His perfect Son, so it was fitting He should be the only-begotten of His mother, as her most perfect offspring."[117] The implication is clear. Wherever there is a production of something which is in all ways perfect, there is unicity, not multiplicity of generation, because multiplication, or plurality implies imperfection. There is multiplicity only when no one individual can adequately, or always, completely realize the perfection of a species. So, among the angels, who are altogether immaterial and hence without the imperfections of matter, there is no multiplicity within any species; each angelic species has but one individual. What good could be accomplished by multiplying the same specific perfection in many individuals so long as it is securely expressed in one?

---

[116] *Psalm* 18:6.

The multiplication of human individuals, of human conceptions, therefore, is ordained to the perfection and the permanence of the human species. Our nature is by its intrinsic laws mortal, defectible; no one human person forever and definitely enshrines our human perfection. For it is precisely the union of soul and body that constitutes our nature; and it is precisely that union which is, in the natural order, fleeting.

Human parents can bring forth several children, then, simply because no one of them perfectly and permanently embraces all human perfection.

But what of Christ? Does not the creed of our faith say of Him *"perfectus Deus, perfectus homo"*? He is the totality of human perfection caught up into an everlasting, divine union. All accomplishment of human science and wisdom, all beauty of human virtues, even all perfection of human bodily integrity—all is, natively and by right, and forever, His. Whether we consider the natural or the supernatural orders, He is the ideal of humanity, who shall never pass away. And this man is God in Person.

Mary could not be the mother of other children because in her all God's purposes in creating human regenerative powers were, so to say, exhausted. The fruit of her womb is divinely beyond human capacities, yet it is the enshrinement of human achievement. There is no going beyond Him: so even nature's powers in her who gave Him birth must stop. Those powers have touched, in physical substantial truth, very God, in perfect human flesh. To infinite achievement, no more can be added.

---

[117] *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 28, a. 3.

Is Mary's virginity *post partum* a wasted, idle thing? It is rather nature's most magnificent acknowledgment of its incarnate God. In all the harmony of God's immense universe, bodily, human, angelic, in all taken together, there is no other recognition of God like unto Mary's recognition—her perpetual, grateful, awed virginity.

And for us, there is here again enlightenment and assurance. Mary is the Mother of the true Author of life; therefore she could never by subsequent conceptions be the bestower of death. For this reason too she is forever virgin. And for this reason do we turn to her, with the greater and more child-like confidence. Whatever she shall give, and all that she shall give, always it is unto life everlasting.

Thomas U. Mullaney, O.P.

Dominican House of Studies
Washington, D. C.

The Church and God's Goodness

Let us turn our thoughts then to the Church. What a comfort it is to think of the vastness of the Church, and of her holiness! There is the incessant action of those mighty Sacraments, and the whole planet transfigured with the daily Mass. There is all heaven busy, as if time were too short for it, with a hundred occupations for each Christian soul, set in motion at that soul's request, or self-moved by gratuitous love and pity. Mary, Angels, Saints, and suffering souls in purgatory, are all hard at work. God is employed, as if His Sabbath after creation were long since past. There are sorrows to be soothed, temptations to be banished, sins to be forgiven, tears to be dried, pains to be healed, good works to be assisted, death-beds to be attended; and the bright throngs of heaven, like some religious Order of Mercy, are busy at them all. O happy we! on whom all this dear diligence is thus perpetually expended!

—Father Faber, in *Creator and Creature* (New York: Benziger Brothers, no date), p. 297.

THE MEANING OF THE NAME "CHURCH"

American Catholics are sometimes amused and sometimes astounded at the strenuous efforts of a few non-Catholic groups to usurp the name "Catholic" for their own religious organizations and assemblies. Such efforts were manifest in the "Chicago Catholic Congress," held during the first three days of this past August. According to the official schedule, one purpose of this Congress was "to give visible expression to the fellowship which exists between the Anglican Communion and our brethren in other parts of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ." The official schedule speaks of a "Chicago Catholic Club." Incidentally, it also carries an advertisement for a religious edifice in which a "perpetual novena" is being conducted.

The artificiality and the linguistic impropriety of any attempt to designate any numerically small and locally restricted religious group as "Catholic," in the face of the overwhelming evidence of the catholicity of the true Church, can never be other than almost painfully manifest. The men who employ this tactic are obviously trying to imitate the society which the world knows as the Catholic Church, and which even they in their moments of unguarded naturalness must designate and recognize as the Catholic Church. Members of the true Catholic Church have never failed to notice this tactic, and to react to it.

Yet, as a group, Catholics do not seem to be aware of the fact that other religious organizations falsely usurp and apply to themselves names and titles which rightfully belong only to the society into which Our Lord formed and organized His disciples during the course of His public life on earth. If we examine the list of denominations in the reports of the Religious Census of 1936 (the last such reports published by the Federal government), we find such titles as "Disciples of Christ," the "Church of God," and even the "Church of the Living God, 'The Pillar and Ground of Truth.' "[1] All of these names belong properly to the one religious society which this same report designates as the "Roman

---

[1] The list of religious denominations actually used in the report of the 1936 census is found in *Religious Bodies: 1936* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), I, 11-16.

Catholic Church." And, most important of all, it is a fact that, strictly speaking, the title "Church" itself belongs to this society and to no other.

Our English word "Church," of course, is a translation of the Latin *"ecclesia,"* which, in its turn, is simply the Greek word "ἐκκλησία" carried over bodily into the Latin tongue. In one of the comparatively few very poor sections it contains, *Webster's New International Dictionary* assigns nine meanings to the noun "Church." No one of these gives even a hint at the true and basic significance of the word "ecclesia" and thus of the term "Church."

Actually, in classical Greek, an ἐκκλησία was a gathering of citizens or voters of one of the old city-states. The term is used in that sense in the *Acts of the Apostles,* in the account of the riot raised against St. Paul in the city of Ephesus. The rioters gathered in the theater of the city, and they constituted an "ecclesia confusa." The Roman city clerk, who broke up the demonstration, made it clear that any complaints the people might have could be dealt with in a "legitima ecclesia," thereby manifesting his conviction that the assembly to which he was speaking was definitely unlawful.[2]

What made this term "ἐκκλησία" a word of unique importance in the religious sphere is the fact that it was employed in the Greek Septuagint version of the Hebrew Old Testament. At first it was used indifferently with two other words, "συναγωγή" and "συνέδριον." In later books of the Old Testament, however, each of these terms had acquired an individual meaning in such a way that, in the time of Our Lord's public life on earth, the συναγωγή was the individual congregation within the Jewish religious commonwealth, the συνέδριον was the assembly of the elders or rulers of this group, while the ἐκκλησία was the gathering of the children of Israel, considered precisely as constituting God's kingdom on earth. All of these words are used in this way in the New Testament.[3] Actually the ordinary use of the term "ἐκκλησία" in the New Testament, its application to the religious community into which Our Lord organized His disciples, is along this line.

---

[2] Cf. *Acts,* 19: 32-40.

[3] The word "συναγωγή" is applied once to a Christian assembly, in *James,* 2: 2. The sense is that of an individual congregation, and the term

The basic truth about the society of Our Lord's disciples, as set forth in divine revelation, is precisely the fact that it is divinely constituted as the *ecclesia,* as the kingdom of God on earth, the chosen people of God, the people of the covenant. Our Lord did not bring it into being merely as a magnificently useful aid to salvation, but as the company outside of which salvation is not to be found. It is the one social unit on earth which actually works and fights for almighty God. It opposes the kingdom or the "church" of Satan, in such a way that every individual human being in this world belongs to one or the other of these two assemblies. The clearest statement of this truth about the nature of the Church considered precisely in its capacity as the Church or *ecclesia* is to be found in the beginning of the encyclical *Humanum genus,* issued April 20, 1884.

> The human race after it fell most miserably, through the envy of the devil, away from God the Creator and Giver of heavenly gifts, separated into two distinct and mutually antagonistic parts. One of these steadfastly fights for truth and virtue, and the other for those things that are opposed to virtue and to truth. The one is the kingdom of God on earth, that is, the true Church of Jesus Christ: and those who wish to belong to it sincerely and in such a way as to attain salvation *(ex animo et convenienter ad salutem adhaerescere),* must of necessity, serve God and His only-begotten Son with the whole mind and with the highest act of the will *(tota mente ac summa voluntate servire).* The other is the kingdom of Satan, in whose possession and control are all of those who, following the fatal example of their leader and of our first parents, refuse to obey the divine and eternal law and, very definitely putting God aside, do a great deal against God.
>
> St. Augustine brilliantly recognized and described these two kingdoms as being like two cities that work, through mutually opposed systems of laws, towards two mutually antagonistic objectives. He indicated the efficient cause of each in these words: "Two loves formed two cities: the love of self, reaching even to contempt for God, an earthly city; and the love of God, reaching even to contempt for self, a heavenly

---

does not designate the Christian society as a whole. Except for the section already mentioned (*Acts,* 19: 32-40), and the passage in *Acts,* 7: 38, where it is applied to the children of Israel as the chosen people of the old dispensation, the word "ἐκκλησία" in the New Testament always applies to the society instituted by Our Lord. Sometimes it designates this society as a whole, and at other times it designates this society as it exists in one of the cities in which it is sojourning in this world.

one." In every period of history the one has been in conflict against the other, with a variety and multiplicity of weapons and of warfare, although not always with the same intensity and force.[4]

In line with this fundamental truth about the Church, it is easy to see that the term "Church" itself is a proper name, indeed in some ways the most proper name, of the society that Our Lord founded during the time of His public life on this earth.[5] There could, objectively, be no more misleading abuse of this term than that by which it is twisted into a mere common designation applicable to any religious society. And when it is, as a matter of fact, applied to religious societies distinct from and opposed to the one organization of which it is the proper designation, then it is obviously voided of all the treasure of revealed truth it is meant to convey to those for whom our Lord died.

We may be very sure that the practice of making the word "church" applicable, for all intents and purposes, to any religious society, and particularly to any organization that claims some sort of attachment to Our Lord, has had a bad effect on the spiritual education of our own people. Men and women who have been led to imagine that there are many "churches," and that the society over which the Bishop of Rome presides as visible head differs from the others only in that it is "the true Church of Jesus Christ," can have at best only a confused and inadequate comprehension of what Our Lord meant when He announced that He was going to found His *ecclesia* on Peter. Such people are being deprived of highly important spiritual nourishment that God Himself wills that they should possess.

What Our Lord promised to build, and what He actually did build, on St. Peter was definitely not merely another religious organization. It was the kingdom of God, the chosen people, the people of the covenant, the true Israel of God. That is precisely what His disciples understood Him to mean when he spoke of the social unit He was going to establish as the *ecclesia.* And, in a special sense, it was going to be *His* Church, *His* kingdom of God, *His* true Israel.

---

[4] The Latin text is found in *Codicis iuris canonici fontes,* edited by Pietro Cardinal Gasparri (Vatican Press, 1933), III, 221 f. An English translation is found in Father Wynne's edition of *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1903), p. 83.

[5] The proper names of the Church are those of which the definitions actually apply to this society. Such are the terms "Church" and "Kingdom." The metaphorical names designate other objects, and the definitions of the terms themselves do not apply rigorously to this society. Such are the expressions "Temple of God," and "Body of Christ."

What Our Lord promised, and what He actually accomplished, was thus the continuation of a social unit which had been in existence since the beginnings of the human race, but a continuation of this unit in a new status and under new conditions. In this new status the *ecclesia* was to be established or founded upon St. Peter. In other words this man and his successors were to be the source of the unity and stability of this *ecclesia* of the new dispensation. The new organized or visible society continued its profession of the divine faith when the mother social unit, the old Jewish religious commonwealth, abandoned that faith in repudiating the divine Redeemer. Thus the older social unit lost its status as the *ecclesia* or the kingdom of God on earth, while the new organization, as the faithful remnant of Israel, went on to be the *ecclesia* in a much more complete and perfect sense than the other had ever been. The society of Our Lord's disciples was the "Church" of the new dispensation. It was and until the end of time it will continue to be the assembly of the chosen people, the people of the covenant, the kingdom of God, in this world. By reason of its association with Our Lord, it is designated as His Mystical Body.

The name of "Church" applied to this society conveys, objectively, this body of truth. The statement that the Roman Catholic Church, the religious society over which the Bishop of Rome presides as visible head, is actually the true Church of Jesus Christ carries this same meaning. Thus the society over which the Roman Pontiff presides is called the Church, not simply by reason of the fact that it is a religious community or organization, but actually and ultimately because this society is the kingdom of God on earth, the assembly of the people of the divine covenant, the social unit apart from which there is no eternal salvation. It is the true Church of Jesus Christ, not because there are or there can be any other "churches" associated with Our Lord, but simply by reason of the fact that this society is really the one and only supernatural kingdom of God on this earth.

Thus we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of the fact that the name "Church" is one of the most proper and meaningful of all the titles which God has bestowed upon the society founded by Our Lord. We must likewise remember that, in its fundamental and scriptural meaning, the term "Church" or *"ecclesia"* is definitely not applicable to any other society or to any other group of human beings in the world. The sum-total of all the men and women in the state of grace do not constitute an "invisible church," despite all of the efforts expended by heretical writers and even by misguided authors of Catholic background to make people imagine that such an "invisible church" was a reality. No other organization or group of organizations has any right whatsoever to this designation, since only the religious community over which the Roman Pontiff presides as visible head has been constituted by God as the congregation or the assembly of His chosen people, the *ecclesia* of the New Testament.

Furthermore, it must be understood that any adjectives that are used with the word "Church" serve, not to qualify this term or to distinguish one individual "Church" from another, but simply to express certain manifest characteristics of the one *ecclesia.* Thus the Creed of Nicea and Constantinople, the one employed in the Mass, contains a statement of belief in "one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church."[6]

The significance of this formula was picked up by theologians of a later day, who designated unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity as genuine marks or notes of the true Church. What these later theologians meant, and what the ancient Fathers who composed and adopted this Creed meant, was that the organization which they knew and designated as the "one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church" was actually the object of faith, the true *ecclesia,* the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God on earth according to the new dispensation.[7] The organized and visible society to which they belonged and within which they were officers, exercising jurisdiction in the name of Christ, was actually the social entity which can be recognized only in the light of divine faith: the new and true Israel, the assembly of the chosen people of God, the people of His covenant. In other words, the Creed of Nicea and Constantinople proclaims the fact that the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic society which men saw in their midst was actually the *ecclesia.*

---

[6] Cf. *DB,* 86.

[7] Cf. Fenton, "The True Church and the Notes of the Church," in *AER,* CXIV, 4 (April, 1946), 283-97; and "An Effective Demonstration from the Marks of the Church," in *AER,* CXI, 5 (Nov. 1944), 380-90.

What that Creed had to say about the Church in no way supported any inference that there might be some other Church which was not Catholic, or that the social unit to which it referred could be other than the very manifest organization within which that Creed was formulated and proposed. Actually the only way in which we can understand the import of the Creed's statement about the Church is by recalling to mind the fact that its treatment of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ runs parallel with what it has to say about Our Lord Himself.

The Creed of Nicea and Constantinople makes an act of belief "in" Jesus Christ, just as it makes an act of belief "in" the Church. In both cases it is dealing with visible realities. In speaking about Our Lord, it names a Man who lived and worked in this world and was heard and seen by the people around Him. But, it expresses the belief that this Man is the Lord, the Son of God, consubstantial with God the Father. It states that this Man, who was crucified and who rose again from the dead, has gone up to Heaven, and that He will return to judge the living and the dead. It acclaims Him as the King whose reign will never end.

In exactly the same way, this Creed speaks of the religious society which men saw in their midst, and which they recognized and discerned as one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic. It proclaims the divinely revealed fact that this religious organization is actually the *ecclesia,* the Israel of God.

This, after all, is one of the basic mysteries in God's supernatural dispensation for mankind. The organization to which we belong, a visible and hierarchical society, in which bad members are mingled along with the good, is the *ecclesia,* the company or congregation of God's chosen people, the social unit outside of which eternal salvation is not to be achieved.

The heretical view that the true *ecclesia* or Church is not, properly speaking, an organized society at all, but is simply the sum-total of all the good men and women in the world, has always had a tremendous appeal to the emotions of a fallen humanity. It somehow can be made to seem quite reasonable to say that only the good, the people in the state of grace, really belong to or are members of Christ's Mystical Body. And it is certainly much more comfortable to pledge allegiance and obedience to a social unit which will not and cannot make any practical demands whatsoever upon those who are associated with it.

Yet the message which Our Lord drove home so sharply to His people contains the information that His kingdom, His *ecclesia,* contains bad members along with the good and that this *ecclesia,* in the conditions of the New Testament, is definitely a visible and organized society. It was and is manifestly the social organization into which Our Lord organized His disciples around Himself during the course of His public life on earth. It was and is the society over which the Bishop of Rome presides as the visible head.

Unless our people are brought to realize the import of the name "Church" as the proper designation of our own brotherhood in Christ, they will never be able to understand why it is that our liturgy celebrates as our feast days the anniversaries of the martyrdoms of the great heroes of the *ecclesia* of the old dispensation. It is because of the nature of the "Church" or the *ecclesia,* as a social unit which has been in existence since the days of our first parents as the *congregatio fidelium in Christo,* that we hail the Maccabees and the other heroes of the Old Testament as *our* brethren.

The Israel of God is and has been the *ecclesia,* the Church. The Church of the New Testament is the continuation of the Israel of the Old Testament. It is the religious unit to which the prophets and the patriarchs of the Old Testament belonged. Their exploits belong to the history of the Church.

To a great extent the doctrinal misfortunes which have afflicted many of the people of our time can be traced to a failure to understand the implications of the name "Church," as it is applied to the society founded by Our Lord. The man who imagines that "Church" or *"ecclesia"* can be interpreted as meaning nothing more than "a religious society" is not in a position to realize the meaning of Catholic doctrine on the necessity of the Church for salvation, or on the relations between Church and state. The Catholic Church is necessary for salvation precisely and only because it is the social unit which is properly designated by the term *"ecclesia."*

And the civil society has always the objective obligations to worship God according to the rites of the true Catholic religion precisely because the society within which those rites are performed is the one company of the people of God's supernatural covenant, the one "Church," on this earth.

JOSEPH CLIFFORD FENTON

The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C.

MEDITATION: THE ASSUMPTION

When time is quite as a chaliced God,
here by my prie-dieu warm with Bernard's thought
a rumor of rejoicing stirs abroad:
and Mary flows into an image caught
by potencies beyond the firmament,
up, up, to swirls of what impatient throng,
until the kingdom meets the thrilled ascent
with every citizen surprised to song.

The gala moon spreads sail to lure her feet,
the sun swings by to mantle joy with joy,
stars frisk about her head in sharpened beat,
as Mary presses forth to reach her Boy—
and I have put aside bright Bernard's tome
to hear a laughing mother welcomed home.

RAYMOND ROSELIEP

Answers to Questions

ERROR AND RIGHTS

Question: A Catholic weekly paper recently ran an article in which it was said that a prominent writer "states that the Pope rejects the view that religious and moral error have no rights." Has the Holy Father made any statement on this subject recently?

Answer: The allocution *Ci riesce,* delivered on Dec. 6, 1953, contains the following paragraph:

> Thus the two principles are clarified to which recourse must be had in concrete cases for the answer to the serious question concerning the attitude which the jurist, the statesman and the sovereign Catholic state is to adopt in consideration of the community of nations in regard to a formula of religious and moral toleration as described above. First: that which does not correspond to truth or to the norm of morality objectively has no right to exist, to be spread or to be activated. Secondly: failure to impede this with civil laws and coercive measures can, nevertheless, be justified in the interests of a higher and more general good.

In other words, the exact opposite of the teaching which this Catholic journal attributes to the distinguished writer is true. The Holy Father strongly affirmed, as one of the two principles to which men must have recourse if they are to deal properly with questions about tolerance in a community of nations, the very doctrine which the Catholic writer, according to the paper, represented him as denying.

Actually the writer whose views were being "summarized" did not make this particular misstatement at all. What he did was to depict the Holy Father as proceeding "to reject the view of certain Catholic theorists who in a sort of cut-and-thrust manner would wish to 'solve' the problem of religious pluralism on the ultimate basis of this doctrinaire argument: Religious and moral error have no rights and therefore must always be repressed when repression of them is possible." The writer, of course, is speaking of the *Ci riesce.*

Unfortunately, the writer misrepresented the Holy Father as badly as the newspaper summary misrepresented his own article. What the Holy Father really taught on this matter was that "the affirmation: religious and moral error must always be impeded, when it is possible, because toleration of them is in itself immoral, is not valid *absolutely and unconditionally.*" The Holy Father did not attribute this "affirmation" to any "theorists," Catholic or otherwise.

The net result of this comedy of errors has been to give our Catholic people the impression that the Holy Father taught something which, as a matter of fact, he did not teach. It is to be hoped that such misrepresentations of pontifical statements will not occur again.

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SECTARIANISM

Question: In a recent issue of a Catholic paper I read that the action of Catholic Bishops in a European country forbidding the joining of Socialistic trade unions by members of the Church was not "strictly a 'Catholic' issue in the narrow sectarian sense of the word." What is "a 'Catholic' issue in the narrow sectarian sense of the word"?

Answer: The article to which our questioner refers justifies the statement that the action of these Bishops was not "strictly a 'Catholic' issue in the narrow sectarian sense of the word" by showing that Protestant leaders have recently made a pronouncement in some measure paralleling the statements of the Bishops. Hence, in the context of this particular article, it would appear that "a 'Catholic' issue in the narrow sectarian sense of the word" is one motivated by teachings which only Catholics, as distinct from members of other religious organizations, profess to accept as true. Among such teachings, obviously, we would have to include the dogmas of papal infallibility, of the Sovereign Pontiff's genuine primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Church militant, and of indulgences, to mention only these three.

On the other hand, the kind of an issue which is not "strictly a 'Catholic' issue in the narrow sectarian sense of the word" is one based upon teachings which Catholics and others profess to accept as true. The contradiction of and opposition to atheism and materialism fall clearly within this class, since both Catholics and a considerable number of non-Catholics are convinced of the inherent falsity of both atheism and materialism.

There is sometimes what appears to be almost a frenzied effort on the part of certain Catholic publicists to show that the causes with which they are concerned fall into this latter class of issues. There seems to be a feeling that, in some way, an issue in which the Church sets out to defend a position which is held by large numbers of non-Catholics as well as by the Church itself is more important than an issue in which a position defended by the Church alone against non-Catholic religious societies as well as against Communists and Socialists. It would be idle to deny the existence of a tendency on the part of some Catholic writers to disassociate themselves as much as possible from these issues which they regard as being Catholic in a narrow sectarian sense.

It is perfectly true, of course, that a non-Catholic could, retaining his unwillingness to enter the Church, sympathize with the efforts of the Catholic hierarchy against atheism in a way in which he would not sympathize with its labors in defense of the dogma of Our Lord's Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament or of the dogma of papal infallibility. Yet Catholic writers must learn that the Church does not exercise its teaching prerogative to gain the sympathy of non-Catholics of good will, but to set forth accurately and clearly the supernaturally revealed divine message. A doctrine which the Church alone, among all the religious societies of the world, defends and proposes as divinely revealed is just as important as a teaching wherein many non-Catholic individuals and institutions agree with the Church. There is absolutely no reason or no excuse for dismissing the teachings which Catholics alone believe and defend as being in any way narrow or sectarian issues or interests.

Linguistically, there is a bad blunder in designating something as being both Catholic and sectarian at the same time. A religious body is a "sect" if it has been cut off from a parent organization. The various non-Catholic religious organizations have all, indirectly or directly, been separated or cut off from the universal *ecclesia*. The teachings of the Catholic Church are precisely the truths which could not in any sense be properly designated as sectarian at all.

JOSEPH CLIFFORD FENTON

STANDING OR SITTING "AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD"

Question: In one passage of the Bible we read that Our Lord *sits* at the right hand of God (Mark, 16:19), whereas we read in another passage that St. Stephen saw Christ *standing* at the right hand of God (Acts, 7:56). Is there any significance in the difference between these two expressions?

Answer: The important part of both quotations is "the right hand of God." When a place at the right hand of God is ascribed to Christ, the meaning is that even as Man He is immeasurably superior in heaven to all other human beings. "Sitting" and "standing" are metaphorical terms. The statement that Our Lord "sits" symbolizes His kingly power, for a king manifests his royal dignity by sitting on his throne. There is no contradiction to this in St. Stephen's assertion that he saw Christ "standing." As Suarez remarks: "He who regularly sits could then arise and stand, so that Stephen, seeing Him thus, could understand that Christ sympathized with him and was prepared to help him" (*in p. III, q. LVIII, art. 4, sect. 3, n. 5*). Or it is possible that in this passage the word "stand" is to be interpreted as meaning merely "to be present." This verb is used in this sense in some modern languages—for example, Italian.

MENTAL RECITATION OF THE DIVINE OFFICE

Question: Does a priest satisfy his obligation of the Divine Office by reciting the Breviary merely mentally, or must he pronounce the words orally?

Answer: It is the unanimous teachings of theologians and canonists that a cleric or religious bound to recite the Canonical Hours must pronounce the words vocally—that is, with movements of the lips and tongue—though not necessarily audibly when he recites the Office alone. The basic reason is that the Divine Office is by its nature a public prayer. However, through a privilege granted by Pope Leo X, some religious orders have received the right to recite the Office mentally, outside of choir. Some authors claim that this privilege has been abrogated, but others, such as Pruemmer (*Manuale theologiae moralis* [Friburg, 1935], II, n. 376), contend that it may still be used by those to whom it was granted or who have a claim to it by communication.

COMMUNIST LITERATURE

Question: What is the ruling of Holy See in regard to Communist literature?

Answer: By a decree of July 1, 1949, the Holy Office declared that it is sinful to publish, propagate or read books, periodicals, etc., which promote the doctrine or actions of Communists or to write in them, and that Catholics who knowingly and freely perform such illicit acts cannot be admitted to the sacraments. This same decree stated that this type of literature is *ipso jure* forbidden in Canon 1399 of the Code of Canon Law. Of course, for a good reason a Catholic could receive permission to read such literature, but to read it without permission would be a sin, the gravity of which would depend on the amount that is read and the danger of perversion and the scandal involved. As in the case of all forbidden literature, there can be instances in which one is uncertain whether or not a particular book or periodical comes under the ban; for there are some writings that have a Communist slant, although they do not definitely and absolutely uphold Communism. Such literature, even though it may not be included in the decree quoted above, should be avoided by Catholics. Periodicals like the *Daily Worker* are certainly forbidden by this decree.

THE RIGHT TO ASSIST AT A MIXED MARRIAGE

Question: Recently I assisted at a mixed marriage in which the groom was a Catholic, having a quasi-domicile in my parish, and the bride a non-Catholic, having a domicile in another diocese. Did I have a right to assist at the marriage? Have I a right to the stole-fee?

Answer: There has been some disagreement among canonists as to which pastor has the right to assist at a mixed marriage—

the pastor of the Catholic party, whether this latter be the bride or groom, or the pastor of the parish in which the bride resides, whether she be the Catholic or the non-Catholic. This latter view seems to be the much more probable (Kelly, *The Functions Reserved to Pastors* [Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D. C., 1947], p. 85). For the Church law makes no exception for the case of mixed marriages when it declares that as a rule the ceremony shall take place before the pastor of the bride (Can. 1097, § 2). However, this same law adds "unless a just reason excuses," and surely there are times when there is a just reason for having a mixed marriage before the pastor of the Catholic groom. Indeed, according to Abbo-Hannan: "It seems that the pastor of the bride is not given a strict right to assist at the marriage; certainly any justifying reason, no matter how slight, justifies the pastor of the groom in assisting at it" (*The Sacred Canons* [St. Louis, 1952], Vol. II, p. 350). And if this pastor has the right to assist at the marriage, he also has a right to accept and to retain the stole-fee. It is only on the supposition that he has no justifying reason for assisting at a marriage such as the questioner describes that he must remit the stipend to the pastor of the parish in which the bride resides.

FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R.

THE VESTED CRUCIFIX

Question: Is there a directive or instruction that prohibits or discourages the use of a large Christ the King Crucifix above the main altar in a church?

Answer: Some years ago Monsignor Harold Collins, in *The Church Edifice and Its Appointments,* stated that the crucifix with a vested corpus seemed to stress the priesthood and kingship of Our Lord rather than the sufferings of the Redeemer. He goes on to state "although such a crucifix has not been condemned, yet it certainly does not conform to the traditional type."

The encyclical *Mediator Dei* speaks very openly on this particular problem. "Assuredly it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the source of the sacred liturgy. For research in this field of study, by tracing it back to its origins, contributes valuable assistance towards a more thorough and careful investigation of the significance of feast-days, and of the meaning of the texts and sacred ceremonies employed on their occasion. But it is neither wise nor laudable to reduce everything to antiquity by every possible device. Thus, to cite some instances, one would be straying from the straight path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive table-form; were he to want black excluded as a colour for liturgical vestments; were he to forbid the use of sacred images and statues in churches; *were he to order the crucifixes so designed that the Divine Redeemer's Body show no trace of His cruel sufferings;* and lastly were he to disdain and reject polyphonic music or singing in parts, even where it conforms to regulations issued by the Holy See."

THE SCAPULAR MEDAL

Question: Recently I heard a sermon and the impression was very definitely given that one could not gain the indulgence of the scapular unless he wore the wool scapular. It seemed to outlaw the scapular medal. Has there been any recent legislation about this?

Answer: We know of no recent legislation concerning the scapular. Father Bonzelet informs us that, instead of the scapular, the faithful may wear a medal and gain all the indulgences and privileges granted for the scapulars. He tells us further that only such medals that have the image of Christ on one side and the image of the Blessed Mother on the reverse side can be blessed as scapulars. He states further that this medal may be worn around the neck or carried on one's person.

The confusion in the mind of the inquirer may have been due to a point emphasized by St. Pius X when the concession of the scapular medal was made. He expressed the desire that the time-honored custom of wearing the wool scapular should be retained.

THE WORDS "ANTISTITE NOSTRO" IN THE CANON

Question: What is the proper thing to do in the Canon of the Mass at the *"Antistite nostro"* when the see is vacant? Do we mention the name of the administrator or just say nothing?

Answer: When the see is vacant, the celebrant at Holy Mass omits the words, *"et Antistite nostro,"* and does not mention the name of the administrator, even though he may be a bishop by consecration.

A DIFFICULTY ABOUT THE "IMPERATA"

Question: When the Ordinary or diocese dies or is transferred to another see does the *oratio imperata* continue or does it end with his death or departure?

Answer: The late Father Mahoney discusses this problem at length. He tells us that the *oratio imperata* usually will have all the constituents of law, except permanence. He states further: "Since, from canon 24, even a personal precept, if given with some legal formality, continues after the prelate's death, still more so, it would seem, does a general precept, unless the contrary is clear from its wording, e.g., *'ad beneplacitum nostrum.'* Our own view, therefore, is that an order to recite an *oratio imperata* continues to be of obligation until withdrawn by the Vicar Capitular. . . . In actual practice, the obligation can easily be discovered and all doubts removed by ascertaining the will of the Vicar Capitular."

AN ERROR IN THE ORDO

Question: I have always been under the impression that if the Ordo is incorrect one makes the mistake with the Ordo and does no more about it. Now I have been told that I am acting under a false impression.

Answer: Van der Stappen and Wuest-Mullany tell us that we are obliged to follow our own approved Ordo, even when on a controverted point the opinion contrary to that of the Ordo's compiler may to some appear more probable. However, if it is quite evident that an error has crept into the Ordo, as in the case of a printer's mistake, or when a direction is openly at variance with the rubrics of the Missal or Breviary or with the Decrees of the Sacred Congregation, then we are obliged to make the necessary correction.

FUNERAL IN A CHAPEL OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

Question: I am chaplain to a group of cloistered nuns of Perpetual Adoration. Recently, one of their members died and the good Sisters insisted on bringing the corpse into the chapel for the Requiem Mass. I forbade them to carry out this plan and offered the Mass of the day *sine corpore.* Did I act correctly?

Answer: We know that the corpse should not be present during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Likewise, a Requiem Mass must not be offered *coram Sanctissimo.* The chaplain was absolutely correct in refusing to bring the corpse into the chapel, and in offering the Mass that he did. Two possible solutions might be offered. The body could have been taken to the parish church where the Requiem Mass *In die obitus* could have been offered. The second possible solution would be to have the chaplain repose the Blessed Sacrament and after the Requiem Mass expose the Blessed Sacrament again.

THE SACRISTY BELL

Question: I have noticed that some parish churches have a bell near the sacristy which is rung as the priest enters the sanctuary for various services. Is this required by law?

Answer: As far as we know there is no legislation insisting on a sacristy bell. In most churches it serves only as a warning that the celebrant of Mass or some other service is approaching the altar.

WALTER J. SCHMITZ, SS.

Book Review

PIUS X: A COUNTRY PRIEST. By Igino Giordani. Translated by Thomas J. Tobin. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1954. Pp. 201. $3.25.

A Pope is a statesman, teacher, sanctifier, ruler, and, of course, a man. He has predecessors and successors, which invites, indeed compels, comparisons. While his face and figure, his activities and sympathies may be known to many, his life is nevertheless really hidden by a veil of privacy penetrated by very few.

All this makes the biography of a Pope a complex undertaking, and one that will have difficulty in satisfying everyone. A Pope is more than a statesman, but he is a statesman, and historians will have a keen interest in knowing the intimate details behind certain decisions and attitudes. He is a teacher, and more than a teacher, for what other teacher can claim the prerogative of infallibility? The exercise of his teaching office will often profoundly influence the course of theological activity and philosophical reflection. Lastly, the Pope is always a man, capable of sanctity, and, of course, capable of something less. If in the writing of the biography of many Popes it is possible to become so absorbed in the externals of his regime as almost to forget the person, it is not possible to write the life of a Pope-Saint and leave his personality and sanctity in the shadows.

The present book was written quite apparently to acquaint lay people with the basic facts of Pius X's life and pontificate. We are shown the statesman, struggling with the feverish forces of anti-clericalism in Latin Europe, especially France and Italy; the teacher striking at the roots of Modernism with the *Lamentabili, Pascendi,* and *Sacrum antistitum;* the pastor, sanctifying through new decrees relating to the early and frequent reception of Holy Communion; and the ruler, jealously guarding and insisting on the liberty of the Church, and instigating the gigantic task of codifying and revising the Church's law. We are also given the picture of the upbringing, and education of young Giuseppe Sarto; his early assignments and eventual elevation to the Episcopacy. Much that was attractive about his personality and compelling about his sanctity emerges from these pages. Nevertheless there are omissions and failures to come to grips with some of the more absorbing aspects of Pius X's career.

Pius X died in 1914, and almost immediately his pontificate took on the aspect of pre-war antiquity. Since that time his reputation with book readers has been rather anomolous. His reputation for sanctity was widespread, and one might say universal, except for a group of persons, literarily articulate, who regarded his summary proceedings against the men mixed up in the Modernist affair as unwise, uncharitable, and even unjust. (He was also blamed for not interfering with the alleged excesses of the anti-Modernists.) But it was on another score that his reputation was made to suffer, especially at the hands of those with literary and scholarly pretentions. He was criticized for lack of breadth, lack of depth, and failure of perception. To some he was the "narrow peasant Pius"—the words are those of Von Hügel. This feeling, however, was far from universal. Hilaire Belloc in a few precise words, written immediately after Pius X's death, said of his pontificate, ". . . as the note of that reign was simplicity of principle rigidly applied, so the note of society which it had to meet and subtly to dominate was one of very rapid and anarchic change. There was an absence of what friends call breadth and enemies compromise, and an absence of what all men call subtlety: save, indeed, the subtlety that always accompanies clear thinking and whose sharpest manifestation is irony. That irony was abundantly present in the rejection and the swift destruction of the weak-headed Modernist folly."

In these few words Belloc goes to the heart of the matter. One of the most profound ironies of Pius X's reign is that his action against Modernism was so successful that few today realize the magnitude of the accomplishment. Another is the unprecedented activity of the last fifty years in all the branches of ecclesiastical learning, especially Scripture. One of the richest ironies of all was provided by the publication of the *Memoirs* of Alfred Loisy, which show that Pius X's perception of the character and disposition of Loisy's work was accurate and to the mark, and that Loisy had succeeded in deceiving his closest friends.

Nevertheless these differences in the appraisal of the character and endowments of Pius X continue to clash, and it would have been helpful if the author had taken some cognizance of them, and discussed them to some degree. It would have been interesting and very much to the point to know, for instance, as Fernessole tells us in his work on Pius X, that the saintly Pontiff, far from acting against Modernism in personal ignorance and at other people's insistence, was a careful reader of the various periodicals and works that served in the propagation of this "synthesis of all errors."

Another aspect of Pius X's reign which has caused comment and speculation, and which it would have been helpful to discuss in more